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Trump administration drops Obama-era water protection rule

By JOHN FLESHER

AP Environmental Writer

TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. (AP) — The Trump administration on Thursday revoked an Obama-era regulation that shielded many U.S. wetlands and streams from pollution but was opposed by developers and farmers who said it hurt economic development and infringed on property rights.

Environmental groups criticized the administration's action, the latest in a series of moves to roll back environmental protections put into place under President Barack Obama.

The 2015 Waters of the United States rule defined the waterways subject to federal regulation.

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MURKY WATERS

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Andrew Wheeler, right, signs a document in front of Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works R.D. James to revoke the Waters of the United States rule, an Obama-era regulation that provided federal protection to many U.S. wetlands and streams, Thursday, Sept. 12, 2019, in Washington.

Associated Press



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Trump administration drops Obama-era water protection rule

Continued from Front

Scrapping it "puts an end to an egregious power grab, eliminates an ongoing patchwork of clean water regulations and restores a longstanding and familiar regulatory framework," Environmental Protection Agency chief Andrew Wheeler said at a news conference in Washington, D.C.

Wheeler and R.D. James, assistant secretary of the Army for civil works, signed a document overturning the rule and temporarily restoring an earlier regulatory system that emerged after a 2006 ruling from a sharply divided Supreme Court. The agencies plan to adopt a new rule by the end of the year that is expected to define protected waterways more narrowly than the Obama policy.

The Clean Water Act requires landowners to obtain federal permits before developing or polluting navigable waterways such

as rivers and lakes. But disputes have long persisted over what other waters are subject to regulation — particularly wetlands that don't have a direct connection to those larger waters, plus small headwater streams and channels that flow only during and after rainfall.

Environmentalists contend many of those smaller, seemingly isolated waters are tributaries of the larger waterways and can have a significant effect on their quality.

Denying them federal protection would leave millions of Americans with less safe drinking water and allow damage of wetlands that prevent flooding, filter pollutants and provide habitat for a multitude of fish, waterfowl and other wildlife, they said.

"By repealing the Clean Water Rule, this administration is opening our iconic waterways to a flood of pollution," said Bart Johnson-Harris of Environment



In this June 7, 2018, file photo, a puddle blocks a path that leads into the Panther Island Mitigation Bank near Naples, Fla.

America. "The EPA is abdicating its mission to protect our environment and our health."

Wheeler said regulators had gone far beyond the intent of Congress under the 1972 clean water law. "The 2015 rule meant that more businesses and landowners across the U.S. would need to obtain a federal permit to exercise control over their own property, a process that can cost tens of thousands of dollars and take months or even years to complete," he said.

"It also put more local land-use decisions in the hands of unelected bureaucrats. Many Americans balked at this idea, and rightfully so." President Donald Trump had ordered the EPA and Army Corps to develop a replacement policy that has a more restrictive definition of protected wetlands and streams.

The Natural Resources Defense Council said the administration's action would be challenged in court.

"The Clean Water Rule represented solid science and smart public policy," the group said in a statement.

"Where it has been enforced, it has protected important waterways and wetlands, providing certainty to all stakeholders." Zippy Duvall, president of the American Farm Bu-

reau Federation, said the 2015 rule had generated a greater sense of urgency among its membership than any other issue.

"When you take the private property rights from a man that's worked all his life ... to grow the food and fiber for all of us to sit down and enjoy three times a day, it's something he just can't stand," Duvall said.

But Laura DeYoung, who runs a small sheep farm near Peninsula, Ohio, said she favored federal oversight to protect Lake Erie, where agricultural phosphorus runoff is blamed for large algae blooms.

"Nothing in the Obama regulations that came out prevented me from farming the way I was previously farming," she said.

The question of which waters are covered under the Clean Water Act has inspired decades of lawsuits and numerous bills in Congress.

The Supreme Court in 2006 produced three differing opinions, leading the Obama administration to craft its rule. It provided federal oversight to upstream tributaries and headwaters, including wetlands, ponds, lakes and streams that can affect the quality of navigable waters.

The regulation drew quick legal challenges from 31 states and court rulings

Associated Press

blocking its implementation in some.

It was effective in 22 states, Washington, D.C., and U.S. territories before Thursday's action.

Betsy Southerland, who was director of science and technology in EPA's Office of Water during the Obama administration, said revoking its policy would create further regulatory confusion.

"This repeal is a victory for land developers, oil and gas drillers and miners who will exploit that ambiguity to dredge and fill small streams and wetlands that were protected from destruction by the 2015 rule because of their critical impact on national water quality," Southerland said.

Sen. John Barrasso, a Wyoming Republican and chairman of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, applauded the Trump administration move, saying the Obama rule "would have put backyard ponds, puddles and prairie potholes under Washington's control."

Democratic Rep. Dan Kildee of Michigan, where two disputes over federal wetlands permits led to the 2006 Supreme Court case, said Trump "has decided to weaken protections for our water and reward corporate polluters." □

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THE RITZ-CARLTON****Ex-FBI No. 2 official faces prospect of criminal charges****By ERIC TUCKER and MI-
CHAEL BALSAMO
Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe, a frequent target of President Donald Trump's wrath, faces the prospect of criminal charges after his lawyers failed to persuade senior Justice Department officials that he didn't intentionally lie to internal investigators.

Two people familiar with the matter said Thursday that Deputy Attorney General Jeffrey Rosen declined an appeal from McCabe's lawyers aimed at preventing a prosecution. The people weren't authorized to discuss the issue by name and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Still, it wasn't immediately clear when or even whether the United States Attorney's Office in Washington, leading the investigation, might announce charges. Any indictment would put the spotlight not only on

McCabe's actions, but also those of the Justice Department. McCabe's attorneys are likely to argue that the prosecution of McCabe would be politically motivated, with the Justice Department carrying out a vendetta against a Trump adversary.

They are likely to highlight the personal enmity between the two men, with Trump criticizing McCabe even before he took office and McCabe describing the president as a "deliberate liar." McCabe's attorneys have argued that he should not face charges on accusations that he lied to internal investigators about whether he had authorized a news media leak related to an investigation of the Clinton Foundation in the fall of 2016. McCabe has denied intentionally misleading anyone. He and his lawyers have said that any false statements made to investigators were the result of a

faulty memory rather than an attempt to deceive.

They also note the interviews took place during a chaotic and tumultuous time as McCabe was preoccupied by his leadership duties at the FBI and its investigation into potential ties between Russia and the Trump campaign.

McCabe's legal team presented its case during a meeting last month with Rosen and Jessie Liu, the U.S. attorney in Washington, one of the people said. McCabe became acting director of the FBI after Trump fired former Director James Comey on May 9, 2017.

McCabe has said his 2018 firing — for what the Justice Department called "lack of candor" — was politically motivated. He sued the Justice Department in August, saying officials had used the inspector general's conclusions as a pretext to rid the FBI of leaders Trump perceived as biased



In this June 7, 2017, file photo, then-acting FBI Director Andrew McCabe appears before a Senate Intelligence Committee hearing about the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, on Capitol Hill in Washington.

Associated Press

against him.

The investigation followed an October 2016 story in The Wall Street Journal that described internal debates roiling the FBI and the Justice Department weeks before the presidential election about how aggressively the Clinton Foundation should be investigated. The article recounted a

particularly tense phone call between McCabe and a senior Justice Department official about the investigation.

The inspector general's report said McCabe told internal investigators that he had not authorized anyone at the FBI to speak with the reporter, and he did not know who did. □

New U.S. envoy Kelly Craft says she will be voice for freedom

By EDITH M. LEDERER

Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Kelly Craft presented her credentials Thursday as the new U.S. ambassador to the United Nations and said she is coming to the world organization “as a voice of America’s unwavering commitment to democracy, freedom, human rights and, whenever possible, peaceful resolution of conflicts.”

A longtime Republican activist from Kentucky who previously served as U.S. ambassador to Canada, Craft expressed “extraordinary gratitude for the bold leadership” of President Donald Trump, saying she will “seek to maintain and grow ... the reinvigorated policies of this administration.”

“In a world marked by humanitarian crises and geopolitical challenges, strong American leadership is absolutely critical, and I intend to provide it,” she said.

“I will defend America’s values and interests,” Craft said. “I will stand by our friends and allies. I will ad-



New U.S. Ambassador Kelly Craft talks to the media after attending her first Security Council meeting, at United Nations headquarters, Thursday, Sept. 12, 2019.

Associated Press

vocate for the poor and the weak. And I will never fail to work with those who genuinely wish to advance the cause of human dignity.”

Craft spoke briefly to reporters after presenting her credentials to Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and attending her first Security Council meeting, where she delivered a statement about easing the arms embargo on the Central African Republic. It was Craft’s first appearance at the United Nations

since she was confirmed by the U.S. Senate on July 31. She replaces Nikki Haley, who stepped down from the U.N. post in December. Deputy ambassador Jonathan Cohen has been the acting U.S. ambassador since then, and he will remain through late September’s annual gathering of world leaders before taking up his new job as U.S. ambassador to Egypt. Craft and her husband, Joe Craft, have donated millions of dollars to Republican political candidates,

and she is the first major political donor to occupy the top U.N. post for any administration. Joe Craft is chief executive of Alliance Resource Partners, one of the largest coal producers in the country.

At her confirmation hearing, Craft vowed to continue Haley’s efforts to push for reform at the world body and to fight against anti-Israel resolutions. During Haley’s tenure, the U.S. withdrew from the U.N. Human Rights Council and UNESCO over what it called anti-Israel bias.

Democrats criticized Craft at her confirmation hearing for previous remarks she had made doubting the causes and severity of climate change and suggesting that climate change skeptics have valid arguments. They were also concerned about possible conflicts of interest as she holds extensive investments in fossil fuels.

Craft acknowledged the “vast amount of science” regarding climate change and the role humans have played saying: “If confirmed, I will be an advocate for addressing climate change.” Earlier, she

had said, climate change is a “real risk to our planet” that must be addressed.

Democrats also expressed concerns about her time away from Canada during her tenure as ambassador. Craft testified that all of her travel had been approved in advance by the State Department, that much of it was work-related and that she and her husband had paid for all personal trips. A report just before Craft’s confirmation vote by the top Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Sen. Bob Menendez of New Jersey, called her “inexperienced,” “unknowledgeable” and “outmatched.” It said Craft’s lack of “diplomatic or substantive policy experience” could threaten her ability to defend U.S. national interests against other powerful nations. Republicans, including her home-state senator, Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, came to her defense. McConnell cited her work in helping to facilitate the U.S.-Mexico-Canada trade agreement, Trump’s long-sought revamp of the North American Free Trade Agreement. □

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Judge: Hastert victim broke terms of \$3.5M hush-money deal

By MICHAEL TARM

AP Legal Affairs Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — A former student who Dennis Hastert sexually abused decades ago breached an unwritten \$3.5 million hush-money agreement with the former U.S. House Speaker by telling family members and a friend about it, an Illinois judge ruled this week.

But Kendall County Judge Robert Pilmer declined to enter an immediate judgment in favor of either Hastert or the now-adult victim who sued the Illinois Republican, saying decisive questions in the civil case can only be answered at a trial. Hastert’s victim, referred to only as James Doe in filings, brought the breach-of-contract lawsuit in 2016 in a bid to force Hastert to pay the unpaid balance of

the hush money, nearly \$2 million.

Hastert’s lawyers said the 2010 deal was void after Doe spoke about it to others.

Pilmer agreed only in part with Hastert’s position, saying the man who sued did have “an obligation” not to discuss the agreement.

“He needed to keep it secret,” Pilmer said in the seven-page ruling first posted Tuesday.

The roughly \$1.5 million Hastert did pay over four years in \$50,000 cash installments prompted a criminal investigation in 2014. Hastert’s methods for structuring the cash withdrawals so they wouldn’t be flagged tipped off the FBI, initiating the probe and eventually making his abuse of Doe and others public. □

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New York City looks to repeal 'gay conversion therapy' ban

By DEEPTI HAJELA

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A New York City law banning so-called gay conversion therapy would be repealed under legislation introduced Thursday over concerns that a pending federal lawsuit could lead to a decision unfavorable to the LGBTQ community if the case were to make it to the Supreme Court.

Council Speaker Corey Johnson introduced the repeal in what he called "a painful decision." The council had passed the ban against the widely discredited practice, which aims to change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity, less than two years ago, at the end of 2017, and it took effect last year. The proposed repeal now goes to a commit-

tee hearing, scheduled for next week, and then would have a vote in the full council and, if it is passed, would be signed by the mayor. "After intense deliberation, the council concluded that it was best to take this drastic step," Johnson said in a statement. "The courts have changed considerably over the last few years, and we cannot count on them to rule in favor of much-needed protections for the LGBTQ community. To be clear, this alleged therapy is barbaric and inhumane, but repealing this law seemed to be the best path forward." The Alliance Defending Freedom had filed a federal lawsuit over ban in January on behalf of a therapist in Brooklyn, saying it violated free



In this Nov. 10, 2014 file photo, New York City Councilman Corey Johnson speaks at a hearing in New York.

Associated Press

speech between a therapist and client. Alliance Senior Counsel Roger Brooks said that if the repeal goes through, the organization would "commend the move." He called the law "really quite extreme" and pushed back against the idea that it was vulnerable only because of a more conservative Supreme Court. "It's not so much a political issue as well-established First Amendment law," he said. □

Sheriff: 2 from Netherlands arrested inside U.S. security site

By KEN RITTER

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Two men from the Netherlands who said they wanted to post internet video of the once-secret Area 51 military base in Nevada were arrested on suspicion of trespassing onto a secure U.S. government reservation, sheriff's officials said Thursday.

Govert Charles Wilhelmus Jacob Savage and Ties Granzier told Nye County sheriff's deputies they were in the remote area to attend events next week near the once top-secret U.S. Air Force test area known in popular lore as a site for government studies of space aliens.

"That's why they said they were here," Nye County Sheriff's Capt. David Boruchowitz said.

Area 51 is the focus of events next weekend in the tiny towns of Rachel and Hiko inspired by a Facebook post inviting people to "see them aliens."

Savage, 21, and Granzier, 20, were arrested Tuesday on the misdemeanor charges after they were found in a car near a gate inside the Nevada Nation-

al Security Site, authorities said.

They were at least 20 miles (32.2 kilometers) from Area 51.

Boruchowitz said the men were released Thursday on \$500 bail with no order to remain in the U.S. ahead of scheduled court appearances Monday.

Records did not reflect if they had attorneys to speak for them.

Sheriff's deputies said Savage and Granzier had a drone, computer and camera equipment and acknowledged they disregarded "No Trespassing" signs.

The site is a U.S. Department of Energy reservation that is part of a vast government tract in central Nevada. It is separate from Area 51.

The Air Force has posted warnings that people who try to enter the Nellis Air Force Base bombing range surrounding Area 51 will be arrested.

The land surrounding the range is "austere desert, with little to no life-sustaining services like water, food, gas or medical centers," Nellis spokesman Nick Janeway said. □



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Mint, menthol: Vape industry has dug heels in on flavor bans

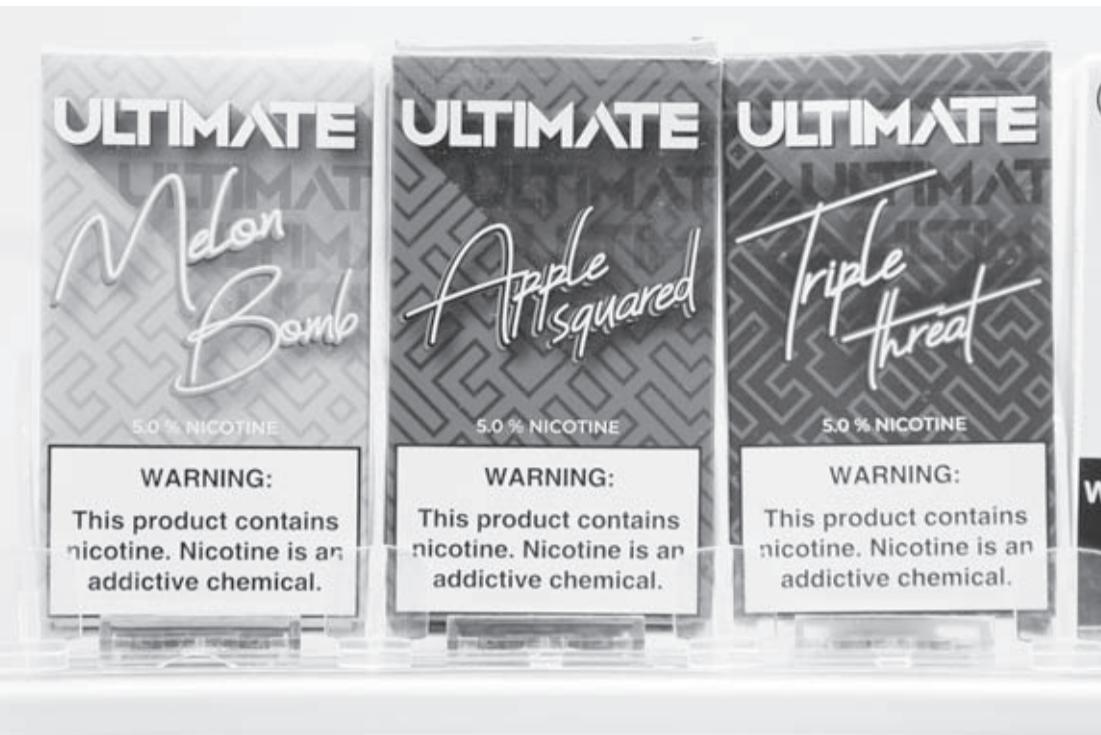
By MARINA VILLENEUVE

Associated Press

AUGUSTA, Maine (AP) — Efforts to ban flavored e-cigarettes and reduce their appeal to youngsters have sputtered under industry pressure in over a half-dozen states this year even as one state, Michigan, moves ahead with its own restrictions and President Donald Trump promises federal ones.

In many cases, the fight by the industry and its lobbyists has focused on leaving the most popular flavors — mint and its close cousin, menthol — alone. But public health experts say that all flavors should be banned, and that menthol can still hook kids on vaping.

The proposal Trump outlined on Wednesday, which would supersede any state inaction, includes a ban on mint and menthol, and an industry giant quickly indicated it would capitulate. "We strongly agree with the need for aggressive category-wide action on flavored products," read a statement released by Juul Labs Inc.



In this Tuesday, Sept. 3, 2019, photo, e-cigarette pods are displayed for sale at Good Guys Vape Shop in Biddeford, Maine.

"We will fully comply with the final FDA policy when effective."

But the fight in state legislatures has been fierce. Lobbyists for the vaping and tobacco industry fought bans on flavors in Hawaii, California, New Mexico, Massachusetts, New York, Maine and Connecticut.

Such bans failed or stalled, even as Michigan's governor this month ordered emergency rules prohibiting flavored e-cigarettes. New York Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo expressed a desire Monday to ban flavored e-cigarettes.

Trump's federal proposal, as it stands, would require no congressional approval, meaning lobbying efforts to defeat it could be less effective than in state legislatures. Juul spent \$1.9 million in the first half of the year to try and sway the White House, Congress and the Food and Drug Administration.

The Vapor Technology Association has reported spending \$78,000 this year in its lobbying fight against California's proposed flavored e-cigarettes ban, while one of the world's largest tobacco producers, Altria, reported spending over \$100,000 last fall solely to lobby such legislation. The bills have since stalled. Reynolds American, which sells Vuse Alto e-cigarettes, reported spending \$240,000 on paid lobbyists in New York this year. At least \$23,000 alone went to fund their lobbying push against a flavored tobacco ban that failed to pass this year.

Altria — which is also Juul's biggest investor — also spent over \$70,000 in Maine

that flavors are the problem so we need to get rid of all the flavors," said Tony Abboud, president of the Vapor Technology Association.

There had been concern that the tobacco and vaping industries were winning their fight to keep at least the most popular flavors — mint and menthol — in play. That concern has now been tempered by Trump's announcement Wednesday that his ban would include menthol and mint.

Last November, the FDA announced plans for a crackdown that could lead to federal regulators pulling all e-cigarette flavors besides menthol and mint — thought to be useful to adult smokers — from shelves. The FDA also said it would also seek to ban menthol cigarettes.

The company's CEO has said that Juul never intended for young people to use their products but that they are "sensitive" to concerns raised by the FDA.

And a spokesman for Juul, Ted Kwong, said before Wednesday's announcement by Trump that the company would support an outright ban on flavors that mimic kid candies, foods and drinks.

Still, in line with the FDA's proposed policy, Juul Labs still distributes mint, menthol and tobacco flavors in retail stores. The company also sells flavored products through its website.

Anti-tobacco and -vaping groups say there's no scientific basis for leaving menthol or mint alone. They warn menthol has been unethically marketed toward African Americans, and that such flavors can still increase the appeal of e-cigarettes for young people who aren't smokers by overcoming the harshness of nicotine.

"Anything that is overcoming the harshness of tobacco flavoring is something that kids are going to find more appealing," said Hillary Schneider, director of government relations in Maine for the American Cancer Society Action Network. □

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Gay married couple sues after daughter denied U.S. citizenship

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN

Associated Press

COLLEGE PARK, Md. (AP)

— A gay married couple in Maryland sued Thursday to challenge the State Department's refusal to recognize the U.S. citizenship of their infant daughter, who was born in Canada via a surrogate this year. The federal lawsuit says a State Department policy discriminates against same-sex married couples and unlawfully treats their children as if they were born out of wedlock.

An attorney for the plaintiffs, Roee Kiviti and Adiel Kiviti, said their suit is at least the fourth such case to challenge the policy. In February, a federal judge in California ruled that a son of a gay married couple has been a U.S. citizen since his birth. The State Department is appealing that decision. Two other federal cases are pending in Washington, D.C., and Georgia. The State Department didn't immediately respond to an email seeking comment on the latest suit, which names Secretary of State Mike Pompeo as the lone defendant.

Roee and Adiel Kiviti are naturalized U.S. citizens who were born in Israel. Their daughter, Kessem, was born via gestational surrogacy in Canada in February using Adiel's sperm and a donated egg.

Roee Kiviti, 41, said he and his husband felt their privacy was invaded when a consular officer asked them questions about how their daughter was conceived and born.

"We are the only parents she has ever known. To have that questioned by your own government is very unsettling, to say the least," he said during a telephone interview Thursday. The State Department determined that Kessem Kiviti isn't a U.S. citizen because Adiel, the only parent with a biological connection to her, hadn't lived in the U.S. long enough to meet a five-year residency requirement under a provision of the Immigration and Nationalization Act, according to the couple's lawsuit. But the five-year requirement is not meant to be applied to the children of married U.S. citizens, the couple's lawyers maintain.

Adiel moved to the U.S. in May 2015 and became a U.S. citizen in January 2019. Roee has lived in the U.S. since 1982 and became a U.S. citizen in 2001. They married in California in 2013 and live with their daughter and 2-year-old son in Chevy Chase, Maryland.

"State Department policy unlawfully denies that the Kiviti family is a family at all," the suit says.

The lawsuit asks the court to rule that Kessem Kiviti has been a U.S. citizen since her birth and seeks an order for the State Department to immediately issue her a passport.

Adiel Kiviti, 40, said the legal challenge consumes precious time that he and his husband could be spending with their children.

"You don't want to have these clouds above your

head," he added.

The couple is represented by attorneys from two New York-based legal advocacy groups, Immigration Equality and Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund Inc., as well as the law firm Morgan Lewis & Bockius. Their case was assigned to U.S. District Judge Theodore Chuang in Greenbelt, Maryland. □



This undated photo provided by Immigration Equality shows Roee, left, and Adiel Kiviti, right, with their children newborn, Kessem and older brother Lev.

Associated Press



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UK government downplays its own stark no-deal Brexit warning

By JILL LAWLESS

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The British government insisted Thursday that its assessment there could be food and medicine shortages, gridlock at ports and riots in the streets if there is a no-deal Brexit is a worst-case scenario, not what is likely to happen.

The stark picture of disruption represents the government's "reasonable worst case scenario" for leaving the European Union on Oct. 31 without a divorce agreement. The government was forced to publish the document late Wednesday after lawmakers demanded it.

Opposition politicians said the "Operation Yellowhammer" document — the government's code name for its Brexit preparations — proved that Prime Minister Boris Johnson is reckless to consider leaving the EU without a deal.

Former Attorney General Dominic Grieve said it was extraordinary that a British government "is content on inflicting on the British public the level of disruption which is set out in the Yellowhammer papers."



The statue of former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill is silhouetted against the sky early morning in London, Thursday, Sept. 12, 2019.

Defense Secretary Ben Wallace said the scenario was a "planning assumption" and would only come true if the government did nothing to mitigate it.

"We are spending the money on doing lots of things to mitigate those assumptions," he told the BBC.

The six-page classified document, dated Aug. 2, said the number of trucks crossing the main freight route

between Calais and Dover would drop by between 40% and 60% within a day of a no-deal Brexit, with disruptions possibly lasting up to three months. The supply of certain types of fresh foods and essential medicines would decrease, prices would go up and poor people would be hit hardest, it said. The paper also describes major disruption for travel-

ers between Britain and the EU, uncertainty for U.K. citizens living in Europe, and says attempts to maintain an open border between Ireland and Northern Ireland would probably fail. It also says a no-deal exit could trigger major protests and even riots.

The government refused to comply with another part of Parliament's demand — that it hand over

Associated Press

emails and texts among officials and aides discussing the government's decision to suspend Parliament for more than a month ahead of the Brexit deadline. Michael Gove, the minister in charge of Brexit planning, said the request was inappropriate and disproportionate. Johnson insists the country must leave the EU on Oct. 31, with or without a divorce deal to smooth the way. But many lawmakers fear a no-deal Brexit would be economically devastating, and are determined to stop him.

Opposition lawmakers and rebel Conservatives have dealt the government's Brexit plans a series of blows. They passed a law that orders the government to seek a three-month delay to Brexit if no agreement has been reached by late October, rejected Johnson's call for a snap general election and ordered the release of the Yellowhammer document. Then on Tuesday Johnson suspended Parliament for five weeks until Oct. 14, sparking outrage among legislators and several legal challenges. □

EU Parliament chief questions 'European Way of Life' title

By SAMUEL PETREQUIN

Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — The European Parliament's president said Thursday that he will meet with incoming European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen to discuss her contentious decision to nominate a commissioner responsible for "protecting our European Way of Life."

The name for the proposed commission portfolio, which includes migration, has caused an outcry, with critics considering it a concession to far-right, anti-migrant ideas.

European Parliament President David Sassoli told reporters he decided to seek a meeting with von der Leyen, who will succeed Jean-Claude Juncker as commission president on Nov. 1, after several political groups commented on



European Parliament President David Sassoli talks to journalists during a news conference at the European Parliament in Brussels, Thursday, Sept. 12, 2019.

Associated Press

the "bizarre" titles of some portfolios.

"I assume that probably in the rush to give names to these portfolios there was a slightly casual approach and we ended up with these rather bizarre

names," he said.

In addition to the "Protecting Our European Way of Life" portfolio, von der Leyen's proposed commission also includes job titles such as "Europe fit for the digital age" or "An Economy That

Works for People."

Sassoli invited von der Leyen to attend a Sept. 19 meeting of political group chiefs at the European Parliament to discuss the issue. Von der Leyen unveiled the team of commissioners she wants to work with over the next five years earlier this week. The names she has put forward should get approval from the European Parliament.

Some critics said the name of the portfolio to be held by Greek nominee Margaritis Schinas is an insult to European values and has been chosen to please the far-right at a time when populist and xenophobic ideas are on the rise across the continent.

"An all-white European Commission claiming to protect 'our European way of life' is a far cry from the idea of unity in diversity on

which this union is built," said Philippe Lamberts, the president of the Greens group at the European Parliament. "Von der Leyen must present a better proposal" next week.

Asked whether the European Commission was considering a name change for the highly political portfolio, spokeswoman Mina Andreeva said no quick decision would be made but the commission was listening to the different points of view. Speaking to Euronews TV channel, Juncker said he didn't agree with the new name of the portfolio because "accepting those coming from far away in Europe is part of the European way of life."

He said he believed the portfolio title did not correspond to Schinas' own values and "I think that this will have to be changed." □



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Southeast Spain hit by worst storms on record, 2 dead

Associated Press

MADRID (AP) — A large area of southeast Spain was battered Thursday by what in some places was the heaviest rainfall on record, with the storms wreaking widespread destruction and killing at least two people.

The regional emergency service said a 51-year-old woman and her 61-year-old brother were found dead inside an overturned car that floodwaters washed away in Caudete, about 100 kilometers (60 miles) south of Valencia, Spanish private news agency Europa Press reported. Officials had initially said the victims were an elderly wife and husband but later corrected themselves.

The Valencia fire department said in a tweet that emergency crews also

pulled three people from a river. They included a 57-year-old man and his 33-year-old son, Europa Press reported. A helicopter winched a third person to safety.

Four police were injured in the rescue operation. The Spanish weather service AEMET classified the region as being "at extreme risk" from torrential downpours. It forecast torrential downpours of up to 90 mm (3 1/2 inches) an hour and up to 180 mm (seven inches) over 24 hours.

The storm was passing over the Mediterranean coast regions of Valencia, Alicante and Murcia during Thursday and Friday.

One of the first places to be hit was Ontinyent, a town south of Valencia, where the River Clariano flooded the streets Wednesday



In this image made from video provided by Atlas, fire engines drive by a flooded river, in Ontinyent, Spain, Thursday, Sept. 12, 2019.

Associated Press

night. Ontinyent mayor Jorge Rodríguez said the town had endured its heaviest rainfall on record, with more than 400 mm (15 inches) by Thursday afternoon. He said the town would ask the national government to declare a catastrophe in the area, which would entitle local people to emergency aid

and long-term financial help to rebuild.

Brown water rushed through streets, washing away cars, and almost reaching the tops of the front doors of houses along the riverbank. Nearby, sandy-colored water surged over the top of the Pantano de Almansa reservoir and raged down its spillway. The River

Clariano rose nine meters (about 30 feet) in two hours around the Valencia town of Aielo de Malferit and tore apart a 16th-century bridge there, local mayor Juan Rafael Espí told Spanish private news agency Europa Press.

Closed roads and train lines disrupted travel. Trucks, trees and fences blew down, and a mini-tornado was also reported.

In Albacete, southwest of Valencia, 13 people were rescued from cars or from the roofs of buildings, emergency services told Europa Press. None was hurt. Across the region, emergency services received hundreds of calls for help. Authorities mobilized the Military Emergencies Unit, a part of the Spanish armed forces that provides disaster relief. □

12 slightly hurt in northern Cyprus Turkish army depot blast

Associated Press

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP) — A pre-dawn explosion at an army munitions depot in breakaway northern Cyprus shattered window panes and slightly injured 12 people while fires ignited by the blast were brought under control, officials said Thursday.

In a statement, Turkey's defense ministry said the explosion occurred at a depot under the Turkish army's munitions command 6 kilometers (4 miles) east of the port town of Kyrenia at 1:30 a.m. Thursday (2230 GMT Wednesday) and that there were no

major injuries as a result of the blast.

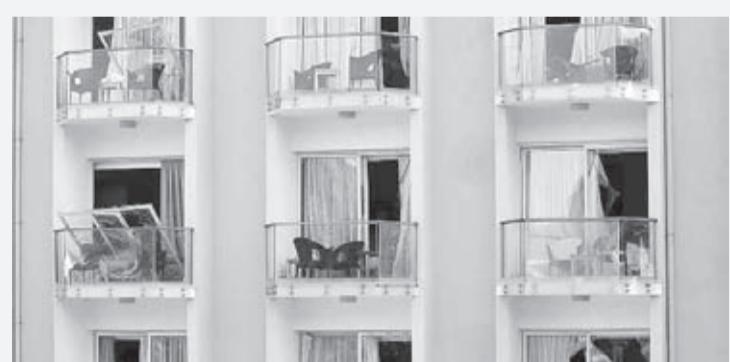
Earlier reports suggested that an undetected fire that broke out in the area had triggered the explosion.

Investigators have already launched a probe to determine the blast's exact cause, the ministry said.

A series of powerful explosions followed the initial blast, video posted on social media showed, causing some bystanders watching the blast to scatter in fear. In one video, shattering glass can be heard following a loud blast as the young woman

shouting it screams and runs away from the window.

Ersin Tatar, prime minister of the breakaway Turkish Cypriot north of the ethnically divided nation, told reporters that nine of 12 individuals who suffered minor injuries were treated and released from hospital. The other three remain in hospital for observation. Tatar said soldiers at the depot managed to flee the explosion without suffering any injuries. He said the blast and fire affected an area of roughly 0.2 square kilometers. He said authorities would carefully



A worker on a balcony, below right, cleans up the debris after an explosion at an army's munitions depot near the coastal city of Kyrenia in the Turkish occupied area at northern Cyprus, Thursday, Sept. 12, 2019.

Associated Press

examine the safety of military installations that are close to residential areas. Kudret Ozersay, the foreign minister, said that electricity has been cut in the vicinity of the blast while nearby homes had been evacuated. He also urged area residents to

New data shows Israeli settlement surge in east Jerusalem

By JOSEPH KRAUSS

MOHAMMED DARAGHMEH

Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Jewish settlement construction in Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem has spiked since President Donald Trump took office in 2017, according to official data obtained by The Associated Press.

The data also showed strong evidence of decades of systematic discrimination, illustrated by a huge gap in the number of construction permits granted to Jewish and Palestinian residents.

The expansion of the settlements in east Jerusalem, which Israel seized along with the West Bank and Gaza in the 1967 Mideast war, threatens to further complicate one of the thorniest issues in the conflict.

The refusal to grant permits to Palestinian residents has confined them to crowded, poorly served neighborhoods, with around half the population believed to be at risk of having their homes demolished.

The data was acquired and analyzed by the Israeli settlement watchdog

Peace Now, which says it only obtained the figures after a two-year battle with the municipality. It says the numbers show that while Palestinians make up more than 60% of the population in east Jerusalem, they have received only 30% of the building permits issued since 1991.

The fate of the city, which is home to holy sites sacred to Jews, Muslims and Christians, is at the heart of the decades-old conflict. The Palestinians want east Jerusalem to be the capital of their future state, while Israel views the entire city as its unified capital. Tensions have soared since Trump recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital in 2017 and moved the U.S. Embassy there, breaking with a long-standing international consensus that the city's fate should be decided in negotiations.

Peace Now found that in the first two years of Trump's presidency, au-



This Monday, Sept. 9, 2019 photo, shows a view of the east Jerusalem neighborhood of Silwan.

Associated Press

thorities approved 1,861 housing units in east Jerusalem settlements, a 60% increase from the 1,162 approved in the previous two years. The figures show that 1,081 permits for settler housing were issued in 2017 alone, the highest annual number since 2000. A total of 1,233 housing units were approved for Palestinians in 2017 and 2018, according to Peace Now.

The data did not include the number of Jewish and Palestinian applications, or the rates of approval, though many Palestinians acknowledge not applying because they say it is nearly impossible to get a permit.

Spokesmen for the Israeli government and the municipality did not respond to requests for comment. The figures are for construction permits issued by the municipality, the final step of a costly bureaucratic process that can take years to complete. The figures show that since 1991, the municipality has issued 21,834 permits for housing units in Jewish settlements in east Jerusalem and just 9,536 for Palestinian neighborhoods.

Hagit Ofran, an expert on settlements who collected and analyzed the data, says the discrepancy in permits dates to 1967, when Israel expanded the city's municipal boundar-

ies to take in large areas of open land that were then earmarked for Jewish settlements. At the same time, city planners set the boundaries of Palestinian neighborhoods, preventing them from expanding.

"In the planning vision of Jerusalem, there was no planning for the expansion of Palestinian neighborhoods," she said, adding that the government has initiated almost no construction in those neighborhoods, placing the burden of planning and permits entirely on the residents themselves. Today, around 215,000 Jews live in east Jerusalem, mostly in built-up areas that Israel considers to be neighborhoods of its capital. Most of east Jerusalem's 340,000 Palestinian residents are crammed into increasingly overcrowded neighborhoods where there is little room to build.

Palestinians say the expense and difficulty of obtaining permits forces them to build illegally. Peace Now estimates that of the 40,000 housing units in Palestinian neighborhoods of east Jerusalem, half have been built without permits. "When you build illegally, without a permit, there's always a chance your house will be demolished," Ofran said.

B'Tselem, another Israeli rights group, says at least 112 housing units in east Je-

rusalem were demolished in the first seven months of 2019 — more than in any full year since at least 2004. On a hot, sunny day earlier this week, Jamil Masalmeh, 59, used a crowbar and power tools to destroy an apartment he had added to his home in the Silwan neighborhood years earlier.

When he failed to secure a permit, municipal authorities gave him the option of demolishing it himself or paying more than \$20,000 for the city to do it. He says he began trying to get a permit 20 years ago, when he built the extension, which consisted of two bedrooms and a kitchen, for his growing family. Eight years ago, the authorities forced him to dismantle it, but he built it again, hoping to eventually get a permit.

"Every time they tell me to get something different. Get this document or that document, get whatever we tell you to, and then in the end, they say you can't build on this land. Why? There's no answer," he said. "I'll die before I ever get a permit."

Jihad Rajabi, who lives in the Palestinian neighborhood of Beit Hanina, says he wasn't given the option of destroying his own home.

Authorities showed up one morning last month with police and heavy equipment. They only gave him

and his extended family of 15 people enough time to salvage some personal belongings before demolishing the 200-square-meter (2,150-square-foot) home. A broken coffee mug, toys and parts of a bedframe poke out from the drift of rubble left behind.

"They are trying to drive us out of Jerusalem," he said. "They fine us, they try to drive us out, but we're going to stay here."

Every Israeli government since 1967 has actively promoted settlement construction, including during the peace process with the Palestinians.

But settlement approvals have accelerated in east Jerusalem and the West Bank since Trump took office, as Israel has encountered little if any resistance from a friendly White House. On Tuesday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to annex the Jordan Valley, which makes up about a quarter of the West Bank, and other settlements there if his party wins next week's elections. The Palestinians cut off all ties with the Trump administration after the Jerusalem decision and have already rejected a peace plan the president has promised to release, saying the administration is marching in lockstep with Israel's right-wing government. The Palestinians and much of the international community have long seen settlements as illegal and a major obstacle to peace. Israel says the settlement issue should be resolved in negotiations and blames the lack of progress on Palestinian intransigence.

With peace efforts stalled and little hope for an independent state anytime soon, the Palestinians who remain in east Jerusalem are left to endure its crowded conditions and an uncertain future.

"If you want to travel, it's a problem. If you want to stay home, it's a problem. If you want to work, it's a problem. If you want to build, it's a problem," Masalmeh said. "Everything's a problem." □

Belting out protest song is latest act of Hong Kong movement

By EILEEN NG
Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Thousands of people belted out a new protest song at Hong Kong's shopping malls for a fourth straight night Thursday, the latest act of resistance highlighting the creativity of demonstrators in their months-long fight for democratic freedoms in the semi-autonomous Chinese territory.

Activists and ordinary citizens, responding to online calls, converged peacefully in at least six malls in the city to sing "Glory to Hong Kong" in a respite from recent violent clashes. More protests are expected this weekend, though on Thursday police banned one planned rally, citing safety concerns.

The protesters have adopted the song, penned anonymously, as their anthem. The lyrics reflect protesters' vow not to surrender despite a government agreement to withdraw a proposed extradition law that sparked the summer of unrest.

The bill, which would have allowed Hong Kong suspects to be sent to the mainland for trial, heightened fears about Beijing's growing influence over the former British colony. Protesters have widened their demands to include direct elections for the city's leaders and police accountability.

At the swank IFC mall, the music reverberated through the floors as over 1,000 people repeatedly sang the song, with the melody played over speakers brought by a participant. One man spontaneously played a piano in the concourse in accompaniment.

Some put their hands to their hearts, while others turned on the lights on their cellphones and lifted five fingers in the air to represent the protesters' five demands.

The crowd, including families with young children, students and senior citizens, also cheered and chanted slogans for more than an hour. Many were not wear-



Demonstrators sing a theme song written by protesters "Glory to Hong Kong" at the Times Square shopping mall in Hong Kong, Thursday, Sept. 12, 2019.

Associated Press

ing masks, the usual attire of protesters.

"This song has connected the people. We are sick and tired of China, so we don't want to sing the Chinese national anthem," said student Melody Chen, 17.

Kelvin Chung, a 30-year-old accountant, said the mall singing showed that Hong Kong people are peaceful in their protests. He said Beijing supporters earlier Thursday sang the Chinese anthem and waved red national flags at the mall, and that he had joined the protest singing to show that many Hong Kong citizens support the fight for democratic reforms.

"Most Hong Kong people love this song. We think that it represents our hearts, our people and our land," he said, adding that the people will not surrender until their demands are met.

The song has been sung at almost every protest since it emerged Aug. 31, including during Tuesday's World Cup qualifier match with Iran where Hong Kong soccer fans booed the Chinese national anthem before kick-off.

Protesters over the more than three months of demonstrations have also sung the Christian hymn "Sing Hallelujah to the Lord" and the "Les Misérables" tune "Do You Hear the People

Sing?"

The songs have boosted protesters' morale and highlighted their creativity in inventing new ways to get their message heard and keep the pressure on the authorities.

The Civil Human Rights Front, which has organized several massive rallies, said

Thursday it is appealing a police ban on its planned march Sunday starting at Victoria Park.

Police also banned the group's Aug. 31 march but protesters turned up anyway. Violent clashes erupted that night, with police storming a subway car and hitting passengers with bat-

tons, a water cannon and pepper spray.

Police official Kwok Chun-kit said police have reason to believe that radical protesters would break away from the march and carry out destructive acts. He noted that some activists have made online vows to escalate violence if the government fails to meet their demands by Friday. Kwok told a news conference that the proposed route would pass close to high-risk buildings including the police headquarters, government offices and subway stations that have been a focus of protests in recent weeks.

Front coordinator Bonnie Leung said violent clashes were unrelated to the group.

"We create a safe zone for people to protest. Our marches are like Hong Kong people giving a chance to the government to end the crisis peacefully but now, they have closed the valve to release public anger. It's like declaring war to peaceful protesters," she told The Associated Press. □

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Mexico says it disagrees with US Supreme Court order

By CHRISTOPHER SHERMAN

Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexican Foreign Secretary Marcelo Ebrard said Thursday that Mexico's government doesn't agree with an "astonishing" U.S. Supreme Court order that would block migrants from countries other than Mexico and Canada from applying for asylum at U.S. borders.

Speaking at President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's daily news conference, Ebrard said that Mexico has a different policy when it comes to asylum seekers and would never implement such a rule.

"Our policy of refuge, of asylum is a tradition in Mexico," he said.

"The United States has a very hardline immigration policy," Ebrard continued.

"The court's decision is astonishing in the impact that it is going to have."

Ebrard declined to explain that impact, saying that he had various meetings scheduled Thursday to try to evaluate what effects the court's decision will have on Mexico. But the ruling is likely to drive more Central American migrants to try to illegally enter the U.S. with the help of smugglers or move them to apply for asylum in Mexico, which is already swamped with applications.

Mexico has long resisted a so-called safe third coun-



In this April 29, 2019 file photo, Cuban migrants are escorted by Mexican immigration officials in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, as they cross the Paso del Norte International bridge to be processed as asylum seekers on the U.S. side of the border.

try agreement with the U.S. that would require migrants to request asylum there first, but the court's decision appears to have unilaterally brought about the same result.

On Thursday, López Obrador said that he spoke by phone with President Donald Trump a day prior, noting the U.S. president recognized Mexico's efforts and relations between the two countries were very good.

He also said things were looking better for the ratification of a new free trade agreement between U.S.,

Mexico and Canada.

"There are no deep differences, there's no discrepancy, nothing that could lead them to take measures or apply measures that affect the economy, the development of our country," López Obrador said. "On the contrary, there's a very favorable environment for the United States Congress... unbeatable conditions to approve the free trade treaty."

His conciliatory approach contrasts sharply with a tack taken earlier this year by Trump, who tied immigration to economic policy

by threatening crippling tariffs on all Mexican imports.

Following Trump's threat, Mexico cracked down on migrants crossing the country, deployed the National Guard to the southern and northern borders, and tried to contain migrants to the southern part of the country.

It also accepted the expansion of the "Remain in Mexico" policy, under which the U.S. has sent more than 40,000 asylum applicants back across the border to wait in Mexico.

Mexico announced Friday

Associated Press

that it had reduced the flow of migrants arriving at its northern border by 56% in three months, and it has said that it's beginning to invest in the Central American countries responsible for the majority of the migrants.

But leftist López Obrador's increasingly hardline immigration policies have attracted criticism at home and abroad.

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet said this week she was concerned that immigration policies implemented in Mexico, the U.S. and some Central American countries "are putting migrants at heightened risk of human rights violations and abuses."

Asked about her comments Thursday, Ebrard said Mexico also had concerns and requested a meeting with her office to exchange information.

The foreign minister also explained that in return for its work on immigration, Mexico has asked the U.S. government to help stem the tide of guns flowing into Mexico. The country currently has more murders than at any point in at least the past 20 years.

Ebrard said that 70% of the crimes committed with guns in Mexico between January and June involved guns purchased in the U.S. □

El Salvador sends police, soldiers to patrol border

Associated Press

LA HACHADURA, El Salvador (AP) — El Salvador is deploying 800 police and soldiers to patrol blind spots along its borders where migrant smugglers and transnational criminals operate. Justice and Public Safety Minister Rogelio Rivas said Thursday that the contingent will be joined by about 300 immigration agents. It will target criminal structures that traffic people, in addition to violent groups who force Salvadorans to flee the country.

"We are determined to improve public safety, and that's why we've come here to launch our new sys-



An El Salvadoran national police agent looks out over La Paz River on the border with Guatemala in La Hachadura, El Salvador, Thursday, Sept. 12, 2019, as part of a deployment of 800 police and soldiers to patrol blind spots along its borders where migrant smugglers and transnational criminals operate.

Associated Press

tem of border patrols," Rivas said. "This will be a strategic arm that we will wield to combat transnational crime." The deployment began in La Hachadura along the country's border with Guatemala, 78 miles west (126 kilometers) of the capital, and is part of an agreement between the Salvadoran government and acting U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Kevin McAleenan to slow the flow of migrants trying to reach the United States.

Rivas said that since he took his position June 1, authorities have captured 159 migrant smugglers. That's the sort of action Washington

has been pressing Central American governments for. Cesar Ríos, of the non-governmental group Salvadoran Immigration Institute, said that Salvadorans carrying their documents will continue to be allowed to leave the country without restrictions. A regional agreement known as CA-4, signed in 2006 by Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua, allows citizens of those countries to move between them without restrictions and only carrying their national identity documents. But passports are required for children to protect against human trafficking. □

LOCAL



Opening further possibilities for efficient transfers from Schiphol Airport through Aeropuerto Internacional Reina Beatrix:

Agreement reached for acceptance of Security level by Aruba Civil Aviation Authority

ORANJESTAD – The Directorate of Civil Aviation of Aruba (DCA) recently approved a Letter of Acceptance, for recognition of Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport's level of security.

This recognition of equivalence allows flights originating from Schiphol Airport into Aeropuerto Internacional Reina Beatrix, to no longer have to duplicate security measures upon arrival in Aruba and to allow transiting passengers and luggage to seamlessly transit at Aruba Airport onto flights to other destinations, without jeopardizing safety and security.

ICAO's Annex 17 allows such arrangements in respect of certain security controls, with support of the Member State and by a validation process and continuously implementing procedures with the other State to ensure that the application of security controls at the point of origin is accompanied by subsequent protection measures against unauthorized interference up until the aircraft departs from the transfer point.

Mr. Edwin Kelly, Director of DCA, indicated that part of the process to achieve recognition of equivalence entailed a thorough audit of the security processes of Amsterdam Schiphol

Airport, including review of staffing, training, procedures, equipment, maintenance, documentation and other measures to guarantee passenger and luggage sterility.

CEO of Aruba Airport Authority NV (AAA), operator of Aeropuerto Internacional Reina Beatrix, Mr. Joost Meijis, indicated that this is a very positive development as States and Airports continue to seek ways to better facilitate more efficient travel between countries and Airports. He stated to look forward to achieving similar types of Agreements with other Airports and States as well, as these agreements ultimately benefit the passengers' travel experience through Aruba's Airport.

Two Airlines are currently flying directly from Schiphol Airport to Aruba. KLM currently operates a total of 7 weekly nonstop services from Schiphol to Aruba which translates to a monthly average of 7,500 passengers, of which some 3,100 are transit passengers. A significant number of passengers traveling from Schiphol are transit passengers, connecting to other Caribbean destinations and as of September 11, 2019 these passengers will be able to transit seamlessly at Aruba Airport. □



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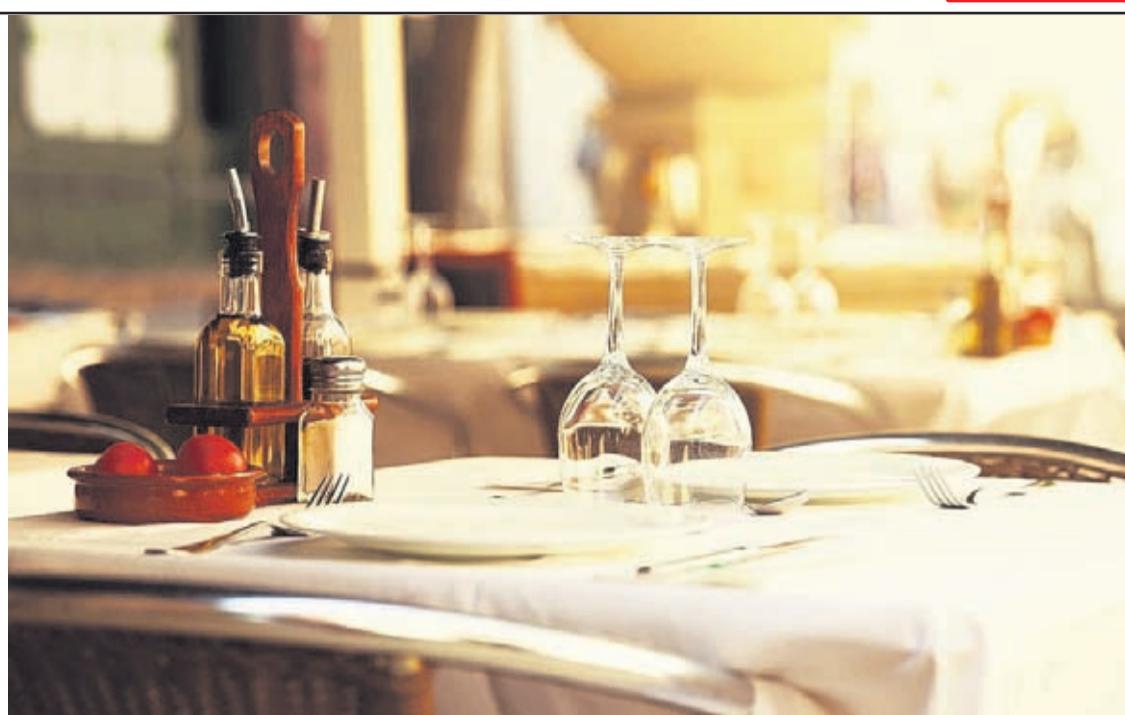


PALM BEACH — Sunset Grille restaurant at the Hilton Aruba Caribbean Resort & Casino invites you tonight to join an elegant evening with fine wines from Rodney Strong and fantastic culinary art from Executive Chef Matt Boland and Executive Sous-Chef Katia Soujol. Wine pairings are a thing! It is a fun way to connect wine, food and company and ensures that you're going to have a genuinely unique experience.

Rodney Strong Vineyards is a family-owned winery based in Healdsburg, Calif.

fornia, United States. It was founded in 1959 by wine pioneer and former dancer, Rodney Strong, the winery focuses solely on Sonoma County grape growing and wines. The divine wines are combined with a four-course menu created by Boland and Soujol. American-born, French-trained Chef Boland returned to the Hilton December 2017. He was the one who led the Sunset Grille to numerous AAA Four Diamond Awards in the 80s and 90s and he is a veteran of the Aruban hospitality industry. The dinner will highlight the taste of Sunset Grille while offering the opportunity to enjoy the perfect paired wines of Rodney Strong.

According to Edible San Francisco, this generation that we are part of shows experience-eagerness. We want to be taken on more of a journey than ever before, trusting the experts and ready to learn about what's new out there. Sunset Grille is more than prepared to guide you and indulge in your culinary experience. □



Reservations are required, seating is limited. For more event details or RSVP contact Shareska.gutierrez@hilton.com or call 526 6005

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ST CRUZ — Ready for a free concert by various local musicians? At a location between several Aruban rocks while at the same time supporting good causes. Hop in your car and drive to Casibari Music Café and Grill this Saturday as this is

your chance to mingle with the locals, enjoy a great beer and bite and at the same time take delight into some great live music.

The restaurant is a popular hangout

place and located across the Casibari Rock Formations. This night the concert plays for retirement home Mari Stella, children's home Casa Cuna and Ambiente Feliz, home for the mentally disabled. A variety of local artists signed up to support these fantastic foundations. Carlos Bislip and his students, Jossy Brokke, Tattoo, Ami Mendez, Etty Toppenberg, Trio Hausteca, Robert Thiel and Robert Jean d'Or y su Solo Banda Show will rock the stage for you from 7 to 11 PM.

For more information please have a look at their Facebook page: Casibari Music Café and Grill. □



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Steven Golub honored as Goodwill Ambassador

PALM BEACH — Recently, Marouska Heyliger of the Aruba Tourism Authority had the great pleasure to honor an Aruban loyal and friendly visitors as Distinguished Visitors and Goodwill Ambassadors of Aruba. The Distinguished Visitor certificate is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism, as a token of appreciation to the guests who visit Aruba 10 years and more consecutively. The Goodwill Ambassador certificate is presented to guests who visit Aruba 20 years and more consecutively.

The honoree was Steven Golub from New York honored as a Goodwill Ambassador. Golub has been coming to the island for 20 consecutive years. He loves coming to the island for the great restaurants, beautiful beaches, perfect weather and all the friends of Aruba.

Heyliger together with the representatives of the Playa Linda Beach Resort presented the certificates to the honoree, handed over some presents and also thanked him for choosing Aruba as his favorite vacation destination and as his home-away-from-home.□



Effective Attention where the patient is Central: Urgent Care Aruba (UCA) brings innovation to the healthcare in Aruba: Now offering the Ultrasound service



ORANJESTAD — Urgent Care Aruba (UCA) proudly announces that after hard work, dedication and investing in the latest top tech equipment they are finally able to offer the community of Aruba a private service of Ultrasound. Currently Ultrasound and other images diagnostics are considered fundamental methods in helping detect and treat patients' severe and chronic diseases.

Ultrasound

Ultrasound is a type of imaging. It uses high-frequency sound waves to look at organs and structures inside the body. Health care professionals use it to view the heart, blood vessels, kidneys, liver, and other organs. At Urgent Care Aruba (UCA) the radiologist is the one conducting the ultrasound procedure and at the same time he is able to interpret it immediately. The benefit of this is that the patient will be able to receive the diagnostic right away. The doctor reading the diagnostic is specialized in this area and is also registered at the Department of Public Health of Aruba. "Many people need access to the ultrasound service, this is a very economical study compared to other studies. It is not invasive since it doesn't use ionizing radiation," according to General Director of Urgent Care Aruba, Dr. Carlos Yagua Jr.

Latest technology

Urgent Care Aruba (UCA) at the Medical Centre in Noord procured to put this ultrasound unit into function with the sole purpose to offer a more integral and efficient service to the patient, that way the patient and doctor would have a more accurate diagnosis. The general strategy of this image service is centralized on a fundamental objective: provide the best attention possible to the users based on quality and policies stated internationally. This way Urgent Care Aruba (UCA) is always looking for improvements in the services they provide. They also assure to provide good service to their patients by exceeding their expectations and strive for continuous excellency.

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The patient doesn't need to wait a week or a month to get an appointment. The patient can get same day assistance at the Noord Medical Center. The patient is also able to choose the day or time of his/her convenience. The department is open from Monday to Saturday and in cases that an ultrasound needs to be



done they are also available after working hours. The patient will receive a detailed medical report from the doctor with ample explanation on the study conducted. With affordable prices the UCA reaffirms its commitment to the community of Aruba.

Urgent Care Aruba

Urgent Care Aruba (UCA) at the Noord Medical center was established 5 years ago. Their main goal was to provide medical attention to our locals but also our tourist. The service provided at UCA is for patients that suffers from any medical condition and does not want to wait till the next day for a consult or checkup. □



Dr. Yagua Jr (UCA Director) and Dr. Lopez-McIntyre (Radioloog Specialista)

Contact

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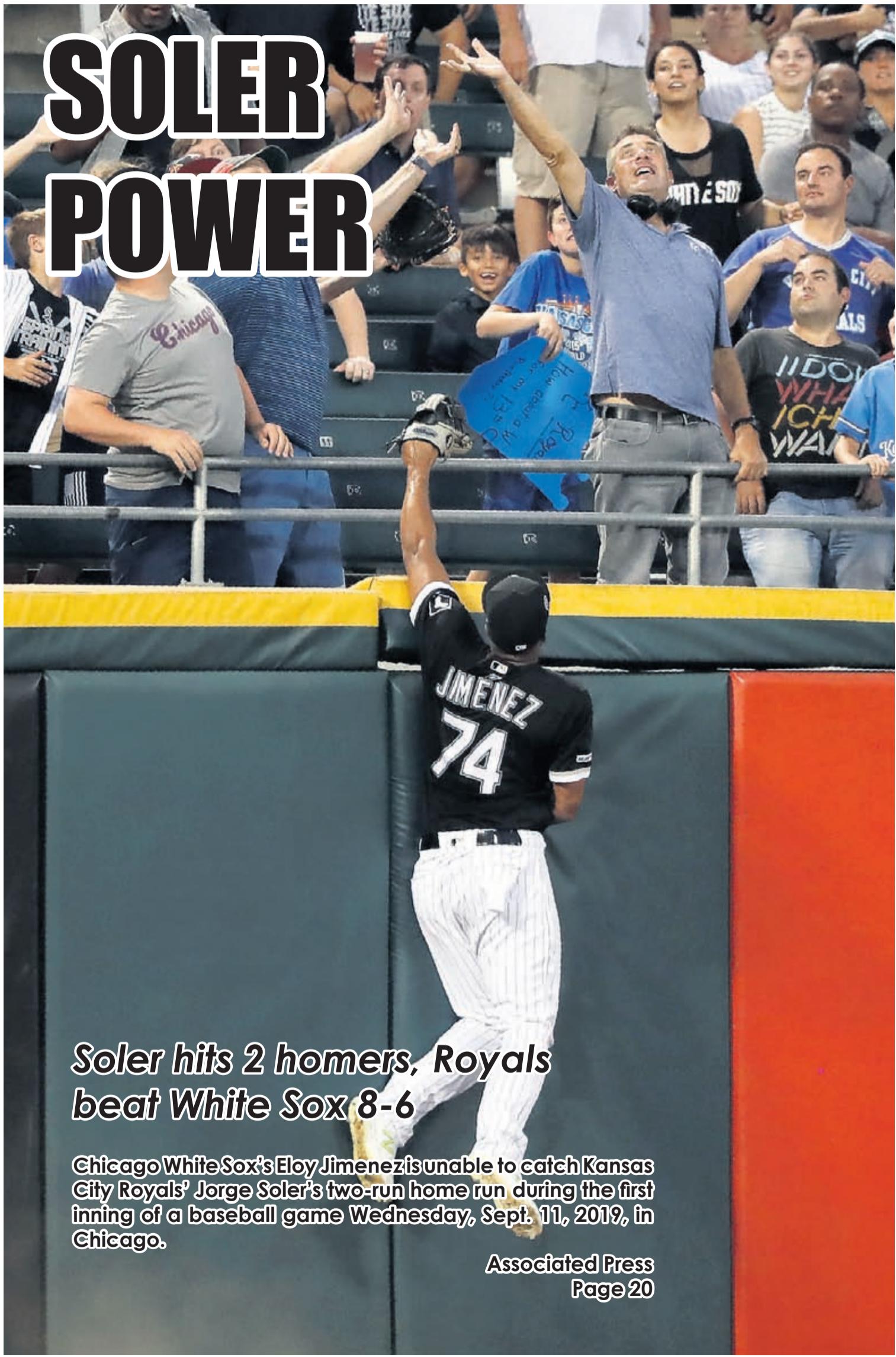
By EDDIE PELLS
AP National Writer

Chalk one up for the "student athletes."

California is on the verge of striking a mortal blow to the system that's been sponging free labor off its "student athletes" for decades. The state is en route to approving a law that gives players a chance to make some money for playing games that entertain the masses and seem to make everyone rich except the players themselves. It's been a long time coming, and the only real question is to what extent NCAA leaders will go to fight this. By the looks of things, they're ready to rumble. In the wake of the state Assembly passing the Fair Pay to Play Act, NCAA leaders sent a letter to Gov. Gavin Newsom on Wednesday, urging him not to sign the bill. "It would erase the critical distinction between college and professional athletics and, because it gives those schools an unfair recruiting advantage, would result in them eventually being unable to compete in NCAA competitions," the letter said.

The second part of this argument makes sense. If a player who attends college in California can get a sponsorship deal while those in other states can't, it builds in an advantage that not even the shadiest college recruiter and his shoe-company buddies can match.

SOLER POWER



**Soler hits 2 homers, Royals
beat White Sox 8-6**

Chicago White Sox's Eloy Jimenez is unable to catch Kansas City Royals' Jorge Soler's two-run home run during the first inning of a baseball game Wednesday, Sept. 11, 2019, in Chicago.

Associated Press
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OBJ says Gregg Williams ordered Browns players to hurt him

By TOM WITHERS

AP Sports Writer

BEREA, Ohio (AP) — Odell Beckham Jr.'s going back to New York seeking revenge.

Not on the Giants.

The three-time Pro Bowl wide receiver added some spice to the Browns' upcoming matchup with Jets on Thursday by accusing former Cleveland defensive coordinator Gregg Williams of getting him injured in a preseason game two years ago.

Beckham said he's been told by Browns players that Williams, who was Cleveland's interim coach for the final eight games last season and is now the Jets' defensive coordinator, instructed them to "take me out of the game."

"I had people who were here when he was here telling us, 'If you get a chance, take a shot at him. If you can hurt him, I guarantee he's going to leave the game hurt.' And stuff like that," Beckham said. "It's fine. It's football, in a sense."

During the 2017 exhibition game, Beckham jumped



In this Sunday, Sept. 8, 2019, file photo, Cleveland Browns wide receiver Odell Beckham Jr. is introduced as he runs out on the field before an NFL football game against the Tennessee Titans, in Cleveland.

to catch a pass and was hit low by former Browns cornerback Briean Boddy-Calhoun as he came down. Beckham managed to avoid hurting his knee but sustained a severe ankle sprain, which he claims has led to other leg injuries. But Beckham believes Boddy-Calhoun acted on Williams' instructions.

"It's like a known rule, in preseason nobody in the NFL's really out to do stuff like that," Beckham said Thursday. "... So you just know who he is. That's the man calling the plays." Beckham initially brought up Williams' tactics unprompted when he was asked what types of defenses he might face in his

return to New York, where he starred for five often-turbulent seasons with the Giants.

Once he heard Williams' name, Beckham pounced with some damning comments about the assistant. "The only thing I'm buying (for Monday's game) is you know probably just got to watch out for the cheap

Associated Press

shots and the dirty hits and all the things that he likes to teach," Beckham said. "That's pretty much all we've got to watch out for. Other than that, I expect the same."

Beckham's accusations have shed new light on Williams, who was suspended by the league in 2012 for his role in the infamous "Bountygate" scandal in which the New Orleans Saints were found to have operated a bounty system where players were paid bonuses for hard hits and deliberately injuring players.

Williams has continuously avoided discussing his troubled past. He worked with the Rams before spending two seasons in Cleveland as Hue Jackson's coordinator before leading the Browns to a 5-3 mark down the stretch last season. The fiery, 61-year-old Williams was thought to be a front-runner for Cleveland's coaching vacancy, but the team picked Freddie Kitchens, who began last season as running backs coach before a successful stint as offensive coordinator. □

NCAA

Continued from Page 17

But the first part—the part about the "critical distinction between college and professional athletics"—is disingenuous to the core, a notion as antiquated as the peach basket and leather helmet, and the reason this whole thing is bound to change.

The notion that these near-full-time athletes in these billion-dollar sports are amateurs, or that they shouldn't get paid, runs counter to the tenets of basic fairness and feels

downright un-American. Hard to believe the Olympics—hardly run by the most forward-thinking or athlete-centric organizations—were decades ahead of the NCAA when it came to unwinding the charade of amateurism in its sports. "It's a fundamental truth of life that our innate ability is what creates our livelihood," said Jeremy Bloom, the former skier/football player who, years ago, got caught in the NCAA crosshairs for having the temerity to want to play



Sen. Nancy Skinner, D-Berkeley, celebrates with Sen. Steven Glazer, D-Orinda, after her measure to let athletes at California colleges hire agents and sign endorsement deals was approved by the Senate in Sacramento, Calif., Wednesday, Sept. 11, 2019.

Associated Press

both sports and to have sponsors in one (skiing) so he could fund his Olympic dreams. □

In most cases, it is being paid for. But that, along with the couple of grand extra that the biggest schools agreed to give to augment some of these scholarships while also relieving pressure for bigger reform, has always felt like the very least they could do.

The California bill is reasonable in that it doesn't ask colleges to pay any more to the athletes, but rather, gives players a chance to hire an agent, put themselves out on the market and see what they can make. □

7 years after 2nd 'retirement,' Kim Clijsters returns to tennis

By HOWARD FENDRICH
AP Tennis Writer

Seven years after retiring from tennis a second time, Kim Clijsters is attempting another comeback at age 36.

The former No. 1 and four-time major champion, who already is a member of the International Tennis Hall of Fame, announced Thursday she is planning to return to the pro tour in 2020, although she's not yet ready to say exactly when or where or how often she will compete.

"My goal right now ... is to be able to get fit enough, and ready tennis-wise, to compete at the highest level. That to me would be my challenge, as of right now. And if you get to that stage, then you push yourself, and then it might be like, 'Hmm, let's see if I can get, I don't know, to the second week of a Grand Slam.' I'll constantly push myself, I think, if I feel that I'm getting better and improving," Clijsters said.

"But it's very hard for me to think about right now, and very unrealistic at this stage, to think, 'I want to try and get to a quarterfinal of a Grand Slam,'" she said. "I don't think like that, because I'm in the moment, and I know how much work I still have ahead."

Clijsters turned pro in 1997, won the U.S. Open for the first time in 2005 and walked away from tennis in 2007 at just 23, shortly before getting married to an American basketball player, Brian Lynch.

After about two years away while having a daughter, Clijsters returned and soon won the 2009 U.S. Open, making her the first mother to collect a Grand Slam singles title since Evonne Goolagong at Wimbledon in 1980.

With a baseline game built on terrific court coverage, the Belgian won another championship at Flushing Meadows in 2010, then added an Australian Open title the following season and moved back atop the rankings.

Clijsters, who now has three children, left the tour again in 2012 and has been working as a television broadcaster.

"I do think the level and the power that a lot of the women bring is higher than maybe in the past, and it's higher at a consistent level," she said. "If I want to be able to compete with these girls, I'm going to have to be the fittest that I ever have been and to be able to move like I did in the past."

She said the earliest stages of her comeback bid have been filmed by a documentary crew for the past six months, although she decided for sure to give this a real try only in recent

weeks. WTA rules allow her, as a past Grand Slam champion, to receive unlimited wild-card invitations to tournaments and, as someone who is older than 30, to opt out of mandatory appearances at certain events. "I know that I'm not going to play — not even close to — a full season," Clijsters said, adding that her intention is to be ready for January.

Clijsters said having her kids in school allowed her to get back on a practice court during the day.

"I have girlfriends now who, at times, struggle to find 'me' time and find their passion and find the time to live for their passion and still balance being a



In this Sept. 13, 2009, file photo, Kim Clijsters holds the trophy after winning the women's championship over Caroline Wozniacki, at the U.S. Open tennis tournament in New York.

Associated Press

mom. And I do feel like ... 'Me, too.' I'm 36 years old. I know in four years, I'm not going to be able to do this," she said. "I've always followed my instincts. I was

very young when I retired to have my first daughter, and came back. To do it now, I think, to me, is a challenge. And I love the challenge. I'm not afraid of it." □

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Villar hits record-setting HR, Orioles beat Dodgers 7-3

By The Associated Press

BALTIMORE (AP) — Jonathan Villar hit a tiebreaking, record-setting three-run homer in the seventh inning, and the Baltimore Orioles beat the Los Angeles Dodgers 7-3 Wednesday night to end a six-game losing streak.

Villar's drive off Caleb Ferguson (1-2) was the 6,106th in the majors this season, breaking the previous mark of 6,105 in 2017. The milestone shot came on a fastball that Villar sent deep into the left-field seats to snap a 2-2 deadlock.

Pedro Severino added a two-run drive in the eighth. Having clinched the NL West title on Tuesday night, manager Dave Roberts rested starters Joc Pederson and Justin Turner. Starting pitcher Ross Stripling toiled for only three innings before getting the rest of the night off and a first-inning double by David Freese was Los Angeles' only hit off John Means through the fifth.

The Dodgers finished with six hits, the most notable a two-run drive by A.J. Pollock.

The victory was Baltimore's 47th of the season, matching its total from last year. The Orioles are two defeats away from their second straight 100-loss season.

Shawn Armstrong (1-1) followed Means with 1 2/3 innings of one-hit relief to earn his second career victory in 100 appearances.

BLUE JAYS 8, RED SOX 0

TORONTO (AP) — Trent Thornton and three others combined on a two-hitter, Teoscar Hernández and Rowdy Tellez homered, and Toronto beat Boston. The slumping Red Sox have lost five straight. They had just four baserunners, and none advanced past second base.

Thornton (5-9) followed an opener with five hitless innings, walking one and striking out seven in his first career relief appearance. Vladimir Guerrero Jr. had three RBIs and Cavan Biggio had two hits and scored twice as the Blue Jays won their second straight following a season-long seven



Baltimore Orioles' Jonathan Villar follows through on his three-run home run during the seventh inning of the team's baseball game against the Los Angeles Dodgers, Wednesday, Sept. 11, 2019, in Baltimore. The Orioles won 7-3.

game losing streak.

Rafael Devers and Brock Holt each had singles for the Red Sox, who were blanked for the second time in three games.

NATIONALS 6, TWINS 2

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Ryan Zimmerman homered and drove in three runs in support of Stephen Strasburg as Washington beat Minnesota for its third win in the last nine games.

Strasburg (17-6) gave up a two-run homer to Jorge Polanco in the third. He allowed only four hits and two walks with seven strikeouts.

Trea Turner added a late home and four relievers kept the Twins from scoring. The Nationals, who trailed Atlanta by 9 1/2 games entering the evening in the National League East, took a 2 1/2-game cushion between them and the Chicago Cubs for the two wild card spots. They were 3 1/2 games above the cut, ahead of Milwaukee.

The Twins took a five-game lead on Cleveland in the American League Central, and six fewer losses than the Indians, into the night. The Indians were playing at the Los Angeles Angels. Pérez (10-7) finished five innings with six hits, five runs and three walks allowed and four strikeouts.

ATHLETICS 5, ASTROS 3

HOUSTON (AP) — Sean Murphy and Marcus Semien homered, hyped pitching prospect Jesús Luzardo looked sharp in his major league debut, and Oakland beat Houston.

Oakland won for the fourth time in five games. The A's closed within a half-game of Tampa Bay for the top AL wild card and stand a half-game ahead of Cleveland for the second spot.

Houston fell a half-game back of the New York Yankees for the best record in the majors. New York's scheduled game with Detroit was postponed.

Astros starter Jose Urquidy struck out 10 and pitched one-hit, one-run ball over five innings.

Josh James (5-1) took the loss. Astros star George Springer matched a career high with his 34th home run, a solo shot in the third.

Brett Anderson (12-9) yielded

two runs and seven hits with four strikeouts in five innings. Liam Hendriks pitched the ninth for his 20th save.

ROYALS 8, WHITE SOX 6

CHICAGO (AP) — Jorge Soler hit a pair of two-run homers among his career high-matching four hits, leading Kansas City to a win over Chicago.

Adalberto Mondesi homered and had three hits, and Bubba Starling and

Associated Press

Ryan O'Hearn also connected as the Royals beat Chicago for the fifth time in six games.

Rookie Eloy Jiménez homered, his 26th, and drove in four runs, and José Abreu added a two-run shot for the White Sox.

Glenn Sparkman (4-11) allowed three runs on four hits and snapped a nine-start winless streak. Ian Kennedy pitched the ninth for his 28th save.

Chicago starter Reynaldo López (9-13) was roughed up for six runs on nine hits in 4 2/3 innings.

INDIANS 4, ANGELS 3

ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP) — Carlos Santana and Francisco Lindor homered, Carlos Carrasco won in relief and Cleveland defeated Los Angeles.

Cleveland is a half-game behind Oakland for the second AL wild-card spot. The Indians trail AL Central-leading Minnesota by four games heading into a three-game series at home against the Twins this weekend.

Carrasco (5-7) pitched 1 2/3 scoreless innings with two walks and two strikeouts.

Adam Cimber struck out Albert Pujols with a runner on first for his first major league save.

Dillon Peters (3-3) took the loss.

RANGERS 10, RAYS 9

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — Rougned Odor hit a go-ahead, three-run homer and Texas beat Tampa Bay to end a six-game winning streak by the Rays, who have the AL's top wild-card spot.

Tampa Bay (87-60) had four runners thrown out on the bases and saw its lead over Oakland for the top wild-card spot trimmed to a half-game after the A's won at Houston.

After their first seven-run first inning at home in 13 years, the Rangers didn't score again until Odor's 25th homer with two outs in the seventh off Nick Anderson (3-1).

Matt Duffy's two-out RBI single in the first gave the Rays an early lead. They tied the game at 7 on Ji-Man Choi's three-run homer in the second, and went ahead 8-7 when Duffy hit a sacrifice fly to deep center with the bases loaded in the fourth. Ian Gibaut (1-0) threw two scoreless innings for his first big league victory. Jose Leclerc earned his 12th save in 16 chances.

MARINERS 5, REDS 3

SEATTLE (AP) — Rookie Kyle Lewis broke up a no-hitter bid with a home run for the second consecutive game, and Seattle beat Sonny Gray and Cincinnati. Just as he did on Tuesday night against the Reds' Trevor Bauer, Lewis delivered Seattle's first hit of the game with a towering homer. In Tuesday's 4-3 win, Lewis hit a solo home run to left field in the fifth inning for his first career hit. On Wednesday, he sent Gray's 105th pitch of the game into right field for a three-run homer in the seventh, his second major league hit.

Gray was pulled after allowing a single to Daniel Vogelbach, one batter after Lewis. He matched his season high with 111 pitches in 6 1/3 innings. It was his third career two-hit performance.

Marco Gonzales (15-11) struck out seven and allowed five hits in seven innings as he extended his career-best win total. □



A member of the New York City Fire Department greets New York Mets' Pete Alonso during a Sept. 11, 2001, tribute before the team's baseball game against the Arizona Diamondbacks on Wednesday, Sept. 11, 2019, in New York.

Associated Press

Mets' Alonso buys custom 9/11 cleats for teammates

By JERRY BEACH

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Pete Alonso has been full of surprises during a memorable rookie season with the Mets. For fans in his new home city, his gesture Wednesday night might be the biggest home run yet.

Alonso coordinated the purchase and production of custom 9/11 cleats for Mets players to wear on the 18th anniversary of the terrorist attacks. The shoes were painted red, white and blue and included "We will never forget" and lettering for first responder units.

Following the Mets' 9-0 win over the Arizona Diamondbacks, Alonso said he wanted to design hats the Mets could wear on the field, but that idea was rejected by Major League Baseball, which hasn't allowed the Mets to wear first responder hats during games since 2001.

"I think it's kind of sad that first game back, they've kind of shot it down every single year since," Alonso said. "It's real unfortunate. So a way to kind of get around that was the cleats."

Alonso said he went around the Mets locker room and collected shoe sizes and preferred brands for each teammate. He said he didn't contact Major League Baseball about the cleats.

"I feel like if Major League Baseball kind of got their hands on it, it may not have been approved," Alonso said. "But I'm really happy that we kind of banded together here in the clubhouse and made something cool happen." The cleats were just the latest in Alonso's efforts to assist those impacted by the attacks. After winning the All-Star Home Run Derby in July, Alonso donated \$50,000 of his \$1 million prize to the Tunnels to Towers Foundation.

Prior to the first pitch Wednesday night, children who lost parents or grandparents to 9/11-related illnesses ran to each position before being joined by the Mets' starters. Alonso gave autographed baseballs to the two children at first base.

"It's not just the victims, it's the scars left behind, like someone missing their mom or missing their dad," Alonso said. "For me, I can't imagine what that's like. The toll isn't necessarily all taken on that day, it's progressively after because there's not someone there in their family. It's different from then on."

Both the Mets and Diamondbacks wore first responder hats during batting practice, then lined up on their respective baselines alongside firefighters, police and EMTs prior to the national anthem.

The Mets ended the game with nine runs on 11 hits. □



San Diego Padres center fielder Manuel Margot makes the catch above the wall for the out on Chicago Cubs' Nicholas Castellanos during the fourth inning of a baseball game Wednesday, Sept. 11, 2019, in San Diego.

Associated Press

Cubs lose 4-0 to Pods, fall into tie for 2nd wild-card spot

By The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Rookie Chris Paddack pitched six brilliant innings and San Diego dropped Chicago into a tie with Milwaukee for the second NL wild-card spot.

Manuel Margot homered off San Diegan Cole Hamels and also made a spectacular catch in center field for the Padres. The Cubs lost for the second straight night and for the fifth time in six games. Milwaukee beat Miami 7-5 in its first game since reigning MVP Christian Yelich suffered a season-ending knee injury. Philadelphia and the New York Mets are two games behind the Cubs and Brewers.

Hamels (7-7) didn't get out of the fifth. The left-hander allowed one run on four hits, struck out six and walked four in 4 1/3 innings. Paddack (9-7) held Chicago to three hits while striking out seven and walking one.

BREWERS 7, MARLINS 5

MIAMI (AP) — Mike Moustakas homered twice, including a tiebreaking, two-run shot in the ninth as Milwaukee defeated Miami in its first game following star outfielder Christian Yelich's season-ending injury.

The Brewers won their sixth in a row and tied the Chicago Cubs for the

second NL wild-card spot. Brent Suter (2-0) pitched three scoreless relief for the win. Josh Hader struck out the side in the ninth for his 30th save.

METS 9, DIAMONDBACKS 0

NEW YORK (AP) — Todd Frazier and Jeff McNeil each homered twice and surging New York beat Arizona ace Robbie Ray. The Mets (75-70) have won the first three games of the pivotal four-game series to move past the Diamondbacks (75-71) in the race for the second NL wild card. New York is tied with Philadelphia, two games behind the Chicago Cubs and Milwaukee for that spot. Arizona has lost four straight.

Steven Matz (10-8) tossed six scoreless innings for the Mets, who jumped on Ray (12-8) for five runs before chasing him with two outs in the first. Wilson Ramos (groundout) and J.D. Davis (single) had RBIs before Frazier and Brandon Nimmo homered on consecutive pitches. Ray gave up five hits and struck out one.

BRAVES 3, PHILLIES 1

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Tyler Flowers hit a three-run homer, Dallas Keuchel struck out eight in six innings and NL East-leading Atlanta beat Philadelphia. The Braves reduced their magic number to eight. They have a 9 1/2-game lead over Washington with

15 left. The Phillies and New York Mets are tied, two games behind the Chicago Cubs and Milwaukee for the second NL wild-card spot.

Keuchel (8-5) gave up one run and three hits to win his fifth straight start. Mark Melancon finished for his 10th save in 10 tries with Atlanta.

Phillies starter Zach Eflin (8-12) allowed three unearned runs and three hits in 3 2/3 innings.

Bryce Harper and Rhys Hoskins hit consecutive singles to start the bottom half of the inning. Harper scored on Scott Kingery's fielder's choice grounder to cut it to 3-1.

ROCKIES 2, CARDINALS 1

DENVER (AP) — Antonio Senzatela pitched six strong innings for his first win in two months, Ian Desmond hit a go-ahead home run and Colorado beat St. Louis.

Tony Wolters had two hits, including an RBI double. Paul Goldschmidt had an RBI double for the Cardinals' run.

Senzatela (9-10) allowed a run on four hits. He struck out five and walked two in his first win since July 14.

Dakota Hudson (15-7) pitched nearly as well, allowing two runs on four hits in six innings. He struck out seven and walked five, one intentionally, and saw his career-high five-game winning streak snapped. □

U.S. loses to Serbia 94-89, assuring worst big-tourney finish

By TIM REYNOLDS

AP Basketball Writer

DONGGUAN, China (AP)

— The U.S. came to China looking to again be the best in the world.

It will go home with the worst tournament showing in program history.

Such is the reality for the Americans now, assured of finishing no better than seventh at the World Cup after falling to Serbia 94-89 in a consolation game Thursday night. The previous worst finish for a U.S. men's team in major tournament appearances was sixth at the 2002 world championships. "We've committed to this from Day One," U.S. guard Joe Harris said. "To get all the way to this point and just kind of have it abruptly come up short, it really stings."

The Americans — the top-ranked team in the world — will be seventh or eighth in China, depending on the outcome of their consolation finale against Poland on Saturday. Harrison Barnes scored 22 for the U.S., which got 18 from Kemba Walker and 16 from Khris Middleton. And even though this team earned the U.S. a berth into the 2020 Tokyo Olympics field, Barnes noted postgame that Saturday's finale may be the last time many members of the World Cup squad get the chance to play for their country.

"We're also the ones who



United States' coach Gregg Popovich, left talks to United States' Donovan Mitchell, center and United States' Kemba Walker at right for the FIBA Basketball World Cup in Dongguan in southern China's Guangdong province on Thursday, Sept. 12, 2019.

Associated Press

stepped up to the plate when others stepped down. We qualified our nation for the Olympics," U.S. center Myles Turner wrote as part of a thread on Twitter after the game.

Bogdan Bogdanovic scored 28 for Serbia, which bolted to a 25-point lead and handed the U.S. its second loss in two days. Vladimir Lucic scored 15 for Serbia, which will play for fifth place Saturday.

"It's a really tough game to play against those guys," Bogdanovic said. "I'm sure both teams were really upset after losing in the quarterfinals and we were just

trying to make people happy." A Serbia-U.S. game was widely expected to be one for gold this weekend. The prospects of that were hyped plenty going into the tournament — especially after Serbia coach Sasha Djordjevic called out the Americans in a television interview by saying "if we meet, may God help them." But all that was on the line Thursday night were bragging rights and a few world ranking points. "There's no regrets from our group in terms of what we've given, what we've sacrificed, the commitment everyone's made to

be away from their families, away from their teams, away from their organizations," Barnes said. "There's no regrets."

Serbia led 44-40 at the half, a margin that may suggest the first 20 minutes were of the back-and-forth variety. They were not. Instead, it was just two really big runs, one by each team.

Serbia won the first quarter 32-7. The U.S. won the second quarter 33-12. Serbia shot 64% in the first quarter and the U.S. shot 19%; in the second quarter, it was the Americans shooting 72%, Serbia 31%, and it stayed relatively tight the

rest of the way. U.S. coach Gregg Popovich lauded his team for making the comeback, basically 24 hours after seeing its medal hopes dashed by the quarterfinal loss to France. "I can't tell you how much I've been impressed the whole time with their character, their stick-to-itiveness and their persistence as they're learning how to play together," Popovich said. "Tonight was a great example of that."

TIP-INS

U.S.: Jayson Tatum (left ankle) and Marcus Smart (left hand) were out with injuries, and neither is expected to play in the finale Saturday. ... Before now, the last time the U.S. dropped consecutive games at the World Cup level was 2002

at the world championships in Indianapolis, losing to Argentina by seven and Yugoslavia by three. The only time the Americans lost three straight in a World Cup or Olympic-level tournament was at the 1970 world championships.

Serbia: Vasilije Micic, whose mother died during this tournament, stayed with the team instead of going home early. He scored 10 points. ... All-NBA center Nikola Jokic was quiet offensively, scoring nine points on 3 for 4 shooting. He did make two free throws with 20.2 seconds left to put Serbia ahead by six. □

Higuita wins stage, Roglic moves closer to Vuelta victory

BECERRIL DE LA SIERRA, Spain (AP) — Primoz Roglic took a step closer to winning the Spanish Vuelta with a strong second-place finish on the 18th stage on Thursday, increasing his overall lead entering the final stretch of the three-week race.

Colombian Sergio Higuita won the 177.5-kilometer (110.3-mile) stage after breaking away and fending off a late charge by Roglic and Alejandro Valverde.

It was the first Grand Tour stage win for the 22-year-old rider from team EF Education First.

"I didn't have any energy left, but I had my heart set on those dreams I've chased for so long," Higuita said.

"I was very emotional at the finish line because there were so many Colombian fans there."

Roglic, a former ski jumper from Slovenia riding for team Jumbo-Visma, increased his lead to 2 minutes, 50 seconds going into the final two competitive stages before the finale in Madrid on Sunday.

"It was another hard day and the team was super strong again," Roglic said.

"We need to continue our good job. Every day is important, we learned our lesson yesterday and I expect full-gas racing every day."

Valverde, the veteran Spaniard from team Movistar, moved back to second overall after this third-place finish on Thursday.

"There are two hard days left," the 39-year-old Valverde said.

"We can still win it or lose it."

Nairo Quintana, Valverde's teammate, had been 2:24 behind Roglic after a strong charge in Wednesday's stage.

But the Colombian ended up losing ground and dropped to third overall.

Fellow Colombian Miguel Ángel López made several attacks on Thursday but couldn't keep up with Roglic.

He was fourth overall, more than four minutes off the lead.

"There is a lot of terrain left, with two interesting stages on which, being strong, we can pull off something interesting," López said.

On Friday, riders will face a flat 165.2-kilometer (102.6-mile) stage that will end in Toledo. □

Baffert: Justify's positive test came from contaminated food

By STEPHEN WHYNO

AP Sports Writer

Hall of Fame trainer Bob Baffert denied giving 2018 Triple Crown winning horse Justify a banned substance that caused a positive test prior to last year's Kentucky Derby and blamed the result on contaminated food. Baffert said in a statement Thursday that he "unequivocally" rejects the implication he'd give Justify or any other horse Scopolamine, which the colt tested positive for in April 2018. The New York Times reported Justify tested positive for the substance after winning the Santa Anita Derby and that the California Horse Racing Board did not adequately investigate the matter.

Justify was allowed to run in the Kentucky Derby a month later and went on to become horse racing's 13th Triple Crown winner.

"Damn shame this great horse, connections and me have to be put through all this," Baffert said in a separate text message to The Associated Press. "It was obvious environmental contamination. It's been a known problem in California."

Attorney W. Craig Robertson also wrote a letter addressed to the Times de-

fending Baffert and saying the California racing board did the correct thing by not pursuing a lengthy investigation. Baffert and Robertson each pointed out Justify was found to have a trace amount of Scopolamine in his system and said that can come from jimson weed, which grows wild in California.

Baffert said Justify passed drug tests in Kentucky, Maryland and New York on the way to the Triple Crown and called on those states' testing agencies to "immediately release information related to Justify's test results" there. Justify did not run another race after winning the Triple Crown and was retired.

Elliott Walden of WinStar Farm, which co-owns Justify, did not immediately respond to a message seeking comment. WinStar Farm released Baffert's statement. Baffert trained the only two Triple Crown winners in the past three decades: Justify in 2018 and American Pharoah in 2015. "Justify is one of the finest horses I've had the privilege of training and by any standard is one of the greatest of all time," Baffert said. "I am proud to stand by his record and my own." While defending his own



In this June 6, 2018, file photo, trainer Bob Baffert walks Justify around the barn after arriving at Belmont Park in Elmont, N.Y.

Associated Press

actions, Baffert said he had no input into or influence on decisions made by the California board, which came under fire for treating this situation differently from past precedent. Upon notification of the positive test result, Robertson told the board to deal with him and not Baffert from that point forward.

"Given all the foregoing facts, I was confident that Mr. Baffert would ultimately prevail if the CHRB pursued the matter," Robertson

wrote. "This left the CHRB with two choices — either pursue a frivolous case that had no merit at great taxpayer expense, or exercise reason and common sense and decide to take no further action."

In a news release Thursday, Animal Wellness Action executive director Marty Irby called for drug testing to be "conducted and overseen by impartial operators and not by industry players with a vested interest in looking the other way." The Times

reported the chairman of the California board owns an interest in horses trained by Baffert.

The California Horse Racing Board said in a statement emailed to The AP: "We take seriously the integrity of horse racing in California and are committed to implementing the highest standards of safety and accountability for all horses, jockeys and participants." A CHRB spokesman said Thursday that it didn't have anything else to add. □

Semenya to finally get her gold medal from 2011 worlds

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — Caster Semenya is finally getting her gold medal from the 2011 world championships after Russian runner Maria Savinova was stripped of the title for doping.

But Semenya won't attend a medal reallocation ceremony at the upcoming world championships in Doha, Qatar, South Africa's track federation said on Thursday.

Semenya was barred from defending her latest 800-meter world title in Doha because she has refused to follow new IAAF rules requiring her to medically reduce her natural testosterone level to be al-

lowed to compete in certain races, including her favorite event.

The medal reallocation is happening after the Court of Arbitration for Sport in 2017 upheld Savinova's doping ban, nullifying her results from 2010 to 2013. She was also stripped of her 2012 Olympic gold in the 800 meters. That title has also gone to Semenya, who finished second in that race, too.

Semenya, who has two Olympic and three world titles in the 800, has, since July, not been allowed to compete at top-level track meets in distances from 400 meters to one mile because she has refused to

take hormone-suppressing medication in line with rules introduced by the IAAF last year.

Semenya has challenged the rules twice in court. She lost at the Court of Arbitration for Sport this year and her second legal appeal is still being considered by the Swiss supreme court. If she fails in court a second time, Semenya may also be unable to defend her Olympic title next year in Tokyo.

Semenya is one of several elite female athletes with a differences of sex development condition, which results in male and female biological characteristics. She was legally identified



In this April 13, 2018, file photo, South Africa's Caster Semenya celebrates after winning the woman's 800m final at Carrara Stadium during the 2018 Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast, Australia.

Associated Press

as female at birth and has identified as female her whole life but was born with the typical male XY chromosome pattern and has testosterone levels higher than the typical female range. □

The IAAF says testosterone gives her an unfair athletic advantage over other female runners and she must reduce it if she wants to run at the Olympics, world championships and Diamond League meetings. □

Facebook expands new tool aiming to shrink 'news deserts'

By BARBARA ORTUTAY

AP Technology Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) —

Facebook is trying to coax "news deserts" into bloom with the second major expansion of a tool that exposes people to more local news and information. But the social network confesses that it still has a lot to learn.

The social media giant said Thursday it is expanding its "Today In" service to 6,000 cities and towns across the U.S., up from 400 in its previous iteration. Launched in early 2018, the service lets Facebook users opt into local news and information from local organizations. Such news can include missing-person alerts, local election results, road closures and crime reports.

The tool lives within the Facebook app; turning it on adds local updates to a user's regular news feed. In areas with scant local news, Facebook will add relevant articles from surrounding areas.

The service won't automatically turn on for people even in the areas it serves, which could limit its reach. So far, Facebook says, 1.6 million people have activated Today In. They receive news from some 1,200 publishers every week.

The service aggregates posts from the official Facebook pages for news organizations, government agencies and community groups like dog shelters. It uses software filters to weed



This July 16, 2013, file photo shows a sign at Facebook headquarters in Menlo Park, Calif. Facebook is trying to coax "news deserts" into bloom with the expansion of a tool that provides people with local news and information, but says it still has a lot to learn.

Associated Press

out objectionable content. Facebook employs no human editors for Today In, so tweaking its algorithm to find such good local stories has been a complicated process. Does a road closure matter if it's 100 miles away? How about a murder? "There is no silver bullet," said Campbell Brown, head of global news partnerships at Facebook, in an interview. "We really want to help publishers address challenges in local markets."

Brown, a former news anchor and host at NBC and CNN, said local reporting remains the "most important" form of journalism today. She said Facebook has a "responsibility" to

support journalism, while also noting that the media industry has been in decline "for a very long time." Local news is just one part of the Today In feature, which also includes posts from local groups along with events and community announcements from schools and governments. A news section within the section shows stories from local newspapers, blogs and TV stations. Facebook isn't paying licensing fees or sharing ad revenue with these outlets, but says the tool is driving new readers to local news outlets. Already, Facebook says it's learned from publishers' input about what doesn't work. For instance, it now

only allows posts from publishers registered with its "News page index," which means they meet guidelines such as a focus on current events and information, citing sources and including dates and don't have a record of publishing false news and misinformation. This means that obituaries from funeral homes, or real estate posts — both of which previously showed up under "news" — are no longer eligible.

The company says publishers featured in Today In see a significant increase "referral traffic" to their websites from Facebook, more so than when people see the same stories in their regular news feed, based on

data from its test partners.

"(With the) news feed, people scroll through passively," said Jimmy O'Keefe, a product marketing manager at Facebook. "We see that people engage with articles more than they would in news feed."

Outside researchers studying local news data provided by Facebook found that about half of the news stories in the Today In feature met what they called a "critical information need" in the communities it served. This could be helpful for news publishers in determining coverage priorities and for Facebook as it tweaks how it presents news to its users.

Facebook has also learned that local news doesn't work like national news. Political stories, for instance, don't generate a lot of local interest. When researchers looked at the types of news stories Facebook showed and how users interacted with them, finding that Facebook users interacted the most with stories serving a critical need — such as information on emergencies, transportation and health. While there were more "non-critical" stories available, on sports, for instance, people didn't interact with those to the same degree. The researchers —Matthew Weber at the University of Minnesota and Peter Andriga and Philip Napoli at Duke University —received no funding from Facebook. □



In this May 1, 2019, file photo, a person walks past a Google sign in San Francisco. Google says it's reached a settlement over employees' ability to speak out about workplace issues.

Associated Press

Google settles with labor board over employee speech

BY RACHEL LERMAN

AP Technology Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Google has reached a settlement over employees' ability to speak out about workplace issues after a former worker filed a complaint. Under the settlement with the National Labor Relations Board, Google said, the company will post notices to remind employees of their federal rights. That includes the ability to talk to each other about workplace conditions and push for changes such as pay raises and safety improvements.

A Wall Street Journal report says the tech giant also has to make sure employees know they are allowed to discuss matters with the media and with each other. Google did not specifically address how employees can talk about issues outside the company, and the NLRB has not yet made the settlement public.

Google employees are known for being some of the most outspoken in the tech industry and have advocated for such topics as equal pay and sexual misconduct investigations. Thousands of employees walked out of work last fall to protest how Google handled the departure of an executive accused of sexual misconduct. □

Stock-picking fund managers are clawing back. Can it last?

By STAN CHOE
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Mutual fund managers are making the most of the shaky stock market, which has provided them an opportunity to prove themselves and lure back investors who dumped them in recent years.

Nearly half of all actively managed U.S. stock funds turned in better returns than their average index-fund peer for the 12 months through June, according to fund tracker Morningstar. Their success rate of 48% may not sound very impressive, but it's much better than the 37% of a year earlier.

That supports the contention that stock-picking fund managers do their best work when markets are shaky because they're free to avoid risky stocks dragging down the S&P 500 and other broad indexes. Index funds, on the other hand, mimic those indexes' falls. These extra returns above index funds — what the industry calls "alpha" — are what managers hope will keep investors from panicking and selling their stock funds when prices fall.

"The unfortunate reality is that active managers tend to add alpha when the market is heading lower," said Steven DeSanctis, equity strategist at Jefferies.



In this Aug. 5, 2019, file photo trader Timothy Nick, right, works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange.

And the market has been heading lower more often in the last year, often to only quickly jerk higher again, as investor fears about a possible recession wax and wane. The S&P 500 tumbled nearly 20% in late 2018, only to start 2019 with its best opening quarter in decades.

Some of the strongest gains in relative performance recently have come from managers of funds that focus on smaller and mid-sized stocks. They likely benefited by steering away from the smallest stocks, which have struggled much more than big stocks

over the last year. But experts caution that short-term performance figures can be erratic, and last year's pickup in performance wasn't enough to shift the long-term trend, which still shows most stock-picking managers failing to keep up with index funds.

"Over longer periods of time, active managers have had a hard time surviving," said Ben Johnson, global director of passive strategies research at Morningstar. "The ones that die off tend to be funds that are not performing very well. But even among the remaining ones, what

you see is many still fail to produce an outcome that investors might have gotten if they had just picked an average passive fund." Consider funds that invest in a mix of large-cap stocks, which are among the most popular investments and often benchmark themselves against the S&P 500. Just 8% of such actively managed funds beat their index-fund peers over the last decade. The penalty for picking the wrong active fund is also often bigger than the potential reward. Over the last decade, more actively managed U.S. large-cap

Associated Press

blend funds did at least 4 percentage points worse annually versus an index fund than did 1 percentage point or better.

Investors have paid close attention to such numbers. They've pulled hundreds of billions of dollars annually out of actively managed U.S. stock funds and plugged roughly the same amount into funds that simply and cheaply track the S&P 500 and other indexes. Some areas of the market seem more conducive to active management than others. Among high-yield bond funds, for example, the majority of active managers have done better than index funds over the last decade. The same goes for funds that own a mix of small- and mid-cap foreign stocks.

Regardless, the best approach seems to be looking for funds with low expenses. While their rates of success may not always be better than a coin flip, they are nevertheless much higher than for more expensive funds.

"Pick your spots and focus on costs," Morningstar's Johnson suggested. "In fixed income and foreign stocks, you're more likely to find a winner, especially if you focus on cheaper funds, and the shortcomings of picking a loser are less dramatic." □

US long-term mortgage rates rise, with 30-year at 3.56%

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. long-term mortgage rates rose this week but remained at historically low levels.

Mortgage buyer Freddie Mac said Thursday the rate on the 30-year, fixed-rate mortgage increased to 3.56% from 3.49% last week. Average rates on the benchmark loan have remained below 3.6% for four straight weeks — the first time that's happened since the fourth quarter of 2016. The average rate for 15-year, fixed-rate home loans rose to 3.09% from 3% last week.

Mortgage rates fell sharply



In this Sept. 3, 2019, photo a sign rests in front of a newly constructed home, in Westwood, Mass.

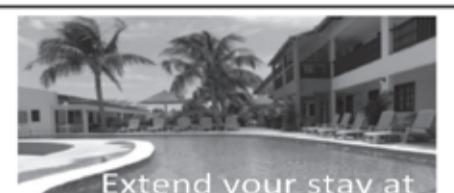
over the summer as a slowing global economy and tensions from the trade war between the U.S. and China have caused inter-

est rates on government bonds to tumble. The yields on government bonds, especially the 10-year Treasury note, influence long-

term mortgage rates.

The trade concerns have appeared to ease in recent days and sentiment has brightened in global stock markets. Interest rates on government bonds have ticked up. China said

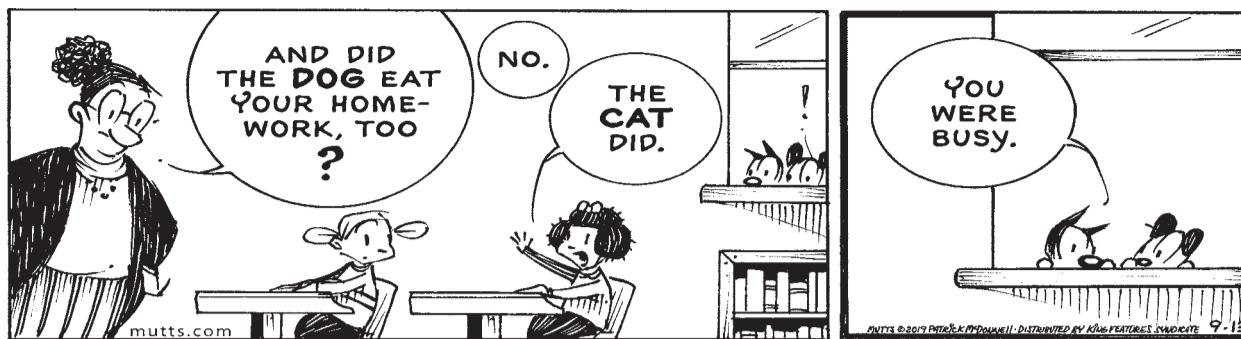
Wednesday that it will exempt U.S. industrial grease and some other imports from tariff increases, though it kept in place penalties on soybeans and other major U.S. exports ahead of negotiations next month. □



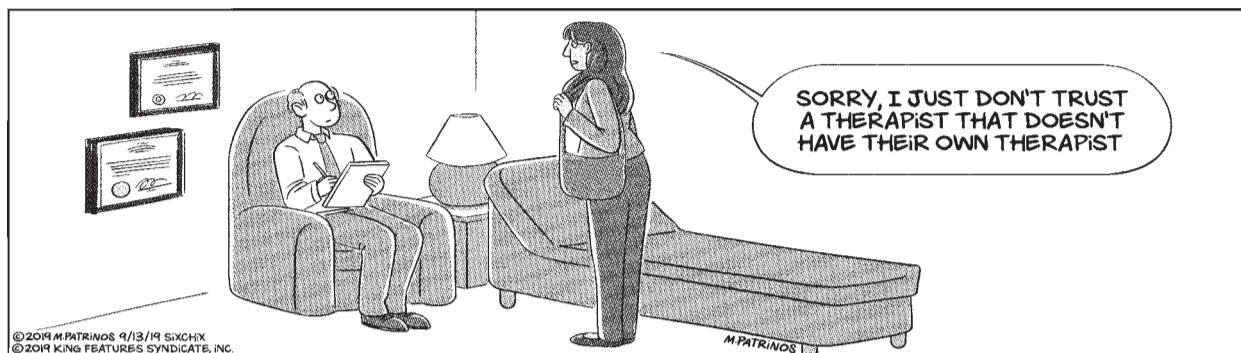
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Mutts



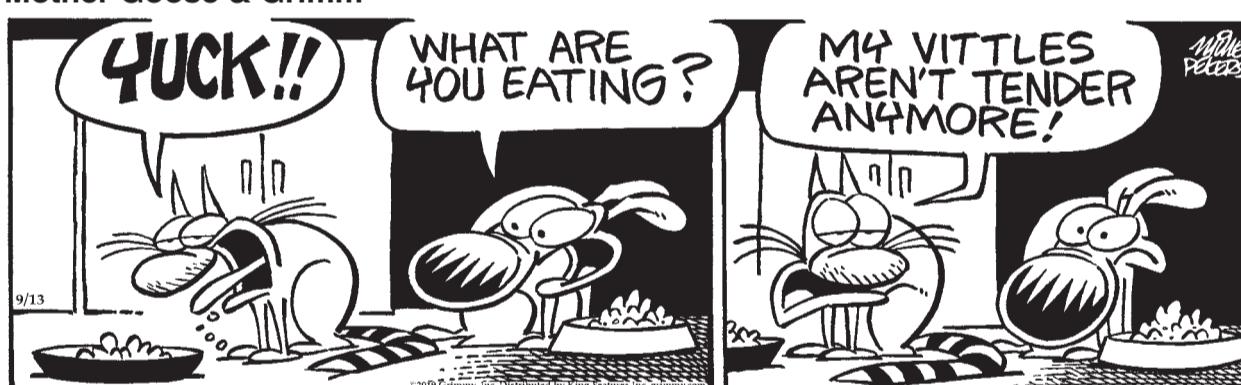
6 Chix



Blondie



Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

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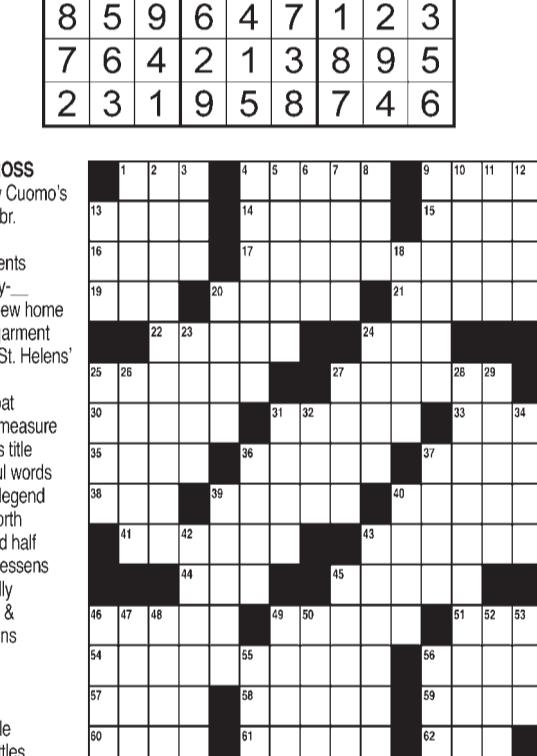
Difficulty Level ★★★★

9/13

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

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| 9 | 8 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 1 | | | | |
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Yesterday's puzzle answer



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Florida's iconic palm trees threatened by invasive disease

By TERRY SPENCER

Associated Press

DAVIE, Fla. (AP) — Florida's iconic palm trees are under attack from a fatal disease that turns them to dried crisps in months, with no chance for recovery once they become ill.

Spread by a rice-sized, plant-hopping insect, lethal bronzing has gone from a small infestation on Florida's Gulf Coast to a nearly statewide problem in just over a decade. Tens of thousands of palm trees have died from the bacterial disease, and the pace of its spread is increasing, adding to environmental woes of a state already struggling to save its other arboreal icon, citrus trees, from two other diseases.

Florida's official state tree — the tall, broad-leaved sabal palm — is especially susceptible and Florida nurseries, businesses and homeowners are taking a financial hit as they scrap infected palms. Some preventive measures can be taken, but once infected, uprooting the tree is the only practical solution.

"Getting this disease under control is essential because it has the potential to drastically modify our landscape," said Brian Bahder, an entomologist who studies insect-borne plant diseases and is a leader in the state's battle against lethal bronzing.

Lethal bronzing, which experts say likely originated in Mexico, also is found in parts of Texas and throughout the Caribbean. Some worry it will migrate to California and Arizona, infecting date palms and damaging that fruit crop. The disease has already heavily damaged Jamaica's coconut plantations, and Brazil is taking preventive measures to avoid invasion.

Coincidentally — but conveniently — lethal bronzing is attacking palms right outside Bahder's office at the University of Florida's agriculture research station near Fort Lauderdale. Some are dying, some are

dead. This gives him a lab to test ideas and make presentations, so he is not removing infected trees as recommended.

"To understand the disease, I need to watch it spread and see what it is doing," said Bahder, an assistant professor with UF. Lethal bronzing's first Florida appearance came near Tampa in 2006, but it's now found from the Keys in the south to Jacksonville in the north. The disease is transmitted solely by the haplaxius crudus, a tiny winged insect sometimes called the American palm cixiid or, generically, a treehopper. These specific treehoppers (there are other kinds) inject the bacteria through their saliva when feasting on the sap from a palm's leaves. Any palm cixiid that later feeds from the tree will pick up the infection and pass the bacteria to more palms.

Once inside a tree, the bacteria migrate to its base, multiplying until they clog the circulatory system — much like human arteries getting blocked by fat and cholesterol. The blockage makes it impossible for the tree's cells to get sufficient nutrients and sugars, starving them. As an infected tree dies, its fronds and central spear leaf transform from green to a tell-tale shade of bronze as it succumbs in about six months.

The disease doesn't infect humans or animals.

Genetic testing shows lethal bronzing likely originated in Mexico's Yucatan region. Bahder's hypothesis is that 2005's Hurricane Wilma, which tracked from the Yucatan to Florida, or a storm with a similar path carried infected treehoppers across the gulf to Tampa. Those insects infected area palms, which infected native treehoppers. The disease spread when winds blew infected bugs to new territories or they hitched rides on vehicles. Bahder said the palm cixiid is particularly attracted to white cars. To check the spread, the state agriculture department regularly inspects palm nurseries and certifies those found free of the disease. If infected trees are discovered, they're destroyed and the nursery's remaining trees are quarantined for at least six weeks. Calls to about a dozen palm tree farms around the state weren't returned — Bahder said it is a problem owners don't like to discuss publicly, fearing it will hurt business.

Eric Muecke, Tampa's urban forestry manager, said the city has had success containing the disease by keeping its palms healthy and surrounding more susceptible palm varieties with trees that don't attract the bacteria-spreading bugs.

"It's not like it marches through a tree population — you don't see one dead tree after another," Muecke said. "It hops around; it's pretty sporadic." Brent Gaffney, a Gainesville landscaper, said Bahder's research is the state's best hope for containing the disease, but only if he gets enough funding. Studies are underway on whether massive doses of antibiotics can save trees in the infection's early stages. □



DOCTOR ON DUTY

Oranjestad

Hospital 7:00 pm / 10:00pm
Tel. 527 4000

San Nicolas

IMSAN 24 Hours
Tel. 524 8833

PHARMACY ON DUTY

Oranjestad:
del Pueblo Tel. 582 1253
San Nicolas:
Aloe Tel. 584 4606

OTHER

Dental Clinic 587 9850
Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002
Urgent Care 586 0448
Walk-In Doctor's Clinic
+297 588 0539

EMERGENCY

| | |
|----------------|----------|
| Police | 100 |
| Oranjestad | 527 3140 |
| Noord | 527 3200 |
| Sta. Cruz | 527 2900 |
| San Nicolas | 584 5000 |
| Police Tipline | 11141 |
| Ambulancia | 911 |
| Fire Dept. | 115 |
| Red Cross | 582 2219 |

TAXI SERVICES

Taxi Tas 587 5900
Prof. Taxi 588 0035
Taxi D.T.S. 587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba 583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv. 280 2828

TRAVEL INFO

Aruba Airport 524 2424
American Airlines 582 2700
Avianca 588 0059
Jet Blue 588 2244
Surinam 582 7896

CRUISES



September 17
Celebrity Equinox
September 18
Monarch
Carnival Magic

AID FOUNDATIONS

FAVI- Visually Impaired
Tel. 582 5051
Alcoholics Anonymous
Tel. 736 2952
Narcotics Anonymous
Tel. 583 8989
Women in Difficulties
Tel. 583 5400
Centre for Diabetes
Tel. 524 8888
Child Abuse Prevention
Tel. 582 4433
Quota Club Tel. 525 2672
General Info
Phone Directory Tel. 118

TODAY **BONDIA**

How to reach us!

The map shows the layout of downtown Aruba. Key locations marked include the Bus Terminal, Royal Plaza Mall, High Rise Hotels, Weststraat, Scheepstraat, Schenkelstraat, Clayia G.F. Bellico Cross, Clayia G.J. Clayia G.J., and L.G. Smith Boulevard. A magnifying glass is focused on the area where the Aruba Today and Bondia offices are located, specifically on Weststraat and Scheepstraat. The text "How to reach us!" is overlaid on the map.

Weststraat
Scheepstraat
Schenkelstraat
Claya G.F. Bellico Cross
Claya G.J.
L.G. Smith Boulevard
Downtown

Weststraat 22
T: 582-7800
E: news@arubatoday.com
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Water, temperature right for life at another star's planet

By MARCIA DUNN

AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — In a tantalizing first, scientists have discovered water at a planet outside our solar system that has temperatures suitable for life.

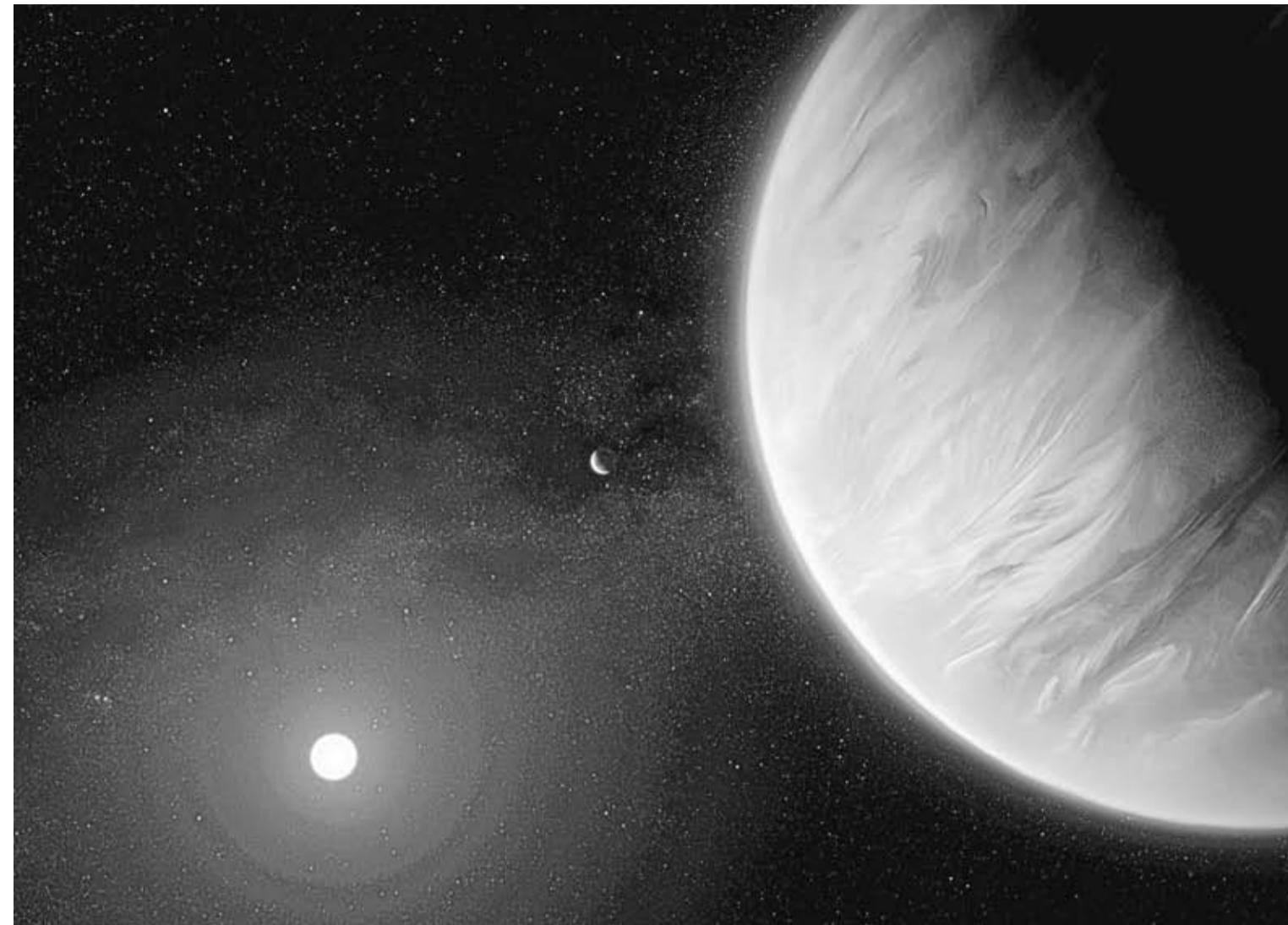
Two research groups announced this week that they've found water vapor in the atmosphere of a planet 110 light-years away in the constellation Leo. This so-called Super Earth is just the right distance from its star to conceivably harbor life.

It's the only exoplanet known so far to have both water and temperatures needed for life, the University College London team reported in the journal *Nature Astronomy* on Wednesday. But lead author Angelos Tsiaras stressed, "This is definitely not a second Earth." Its star and atmosphere are so different than ours, "Earth-like conditions are not possible," Tsiaras told reporters. "The only question that we're trying to ask here, and we're pushing forward, is the question of habitability."

A Canadian-led team announced similar findings Tuesday. In a paper just submitted to the *Astronomical Journal* for publication, these scientists suggest it might even be raining there.

"This represents the biggest step yet taken toward our ultimate goal of finding life on other planets, of proving that we are not alone," the study's lead astronomer, Bjorn Benneke of the University of Montreal, said in a statement.

Discovered in 2015, the planet known as K2-18b is twice the size of Earth with eight times the mass. While it's thought to be rocky, no



This artist's rendering provided by University College London Centre for Space Exochemistry Data researchers shows Exoplanet K2-18b, foreground, its host star and an accompanying planet in this system.

one knows if water's flowing on the surface. Its star, a red dwarf, is considerably smaller and cooler than our sun, a yellow dwarf, and its atmosphere is also different than ours.

Nonetheless, Tsiaras said K2-18b could help determine, "Is the Earth unique?" The results are doubly exciting, Tsiaras noted, given this is not only the first Super Earth with water detected in its atmosphere but the planet also resides within the habitable zone of its star.

The research teams used archived data from the Hubble Space Telescope and other spacecraft to analyze the planet's atmosphere. Further observa-

tions are needed to determine whether the planet is indeed a true water world, using next-generation observatories like NASA's James Webb Space Telescope and the European Space Agency's Ariel, both due to launch in the 2020s. Future telescopes on Earth and in space should help uncover more Super Earths orbiting red dwarf stars — believed to be the most common planets and stars in our Milky Way galaxy. Super Earths are defined as having a mass greater than Earth but less than gas giants like Uranus and Neptune; more than 1,260 have been confirmed to date. While water already has been identified in the at-

mospheres of hot gas giants circling other stars, the latest findings represent the first detection of water vapor in the atmosphere of another type of exoplanet, Tsiaras said.

A NASA tally currently lists more than 4,000 confirmed exoplanets and another 4,000 potential candidates. Most have been detected using the transit method, where telescopes watch for a slight, fleeting dimming of a star's light as a planet passes in the field of view.

For now, scientists know K2-18b takes 33 days to orbit its star, so one year there is one month here. At this distance, temperatures range from minus-100 degrees to 116 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 73 degrees to 47 degrees Celsius.)

The star, glowing red in the day sky, is believed to bombard the planet with radiation harsh enough to quickly inflict any human visitors with cancer, although "life there may have evolved differently" in order to survive, noted the London

Associated Press

team's Ingo Waldmann. A sister planet, meanwhile, orbits closer to the star and is likely too hot to be in the habitable zone.

The cloud cover isn't too thick on K2-18b, otherwise it would have obscured the water vapor in the atmosphere, according to the scientists.

The surface, meanwhile, could be wet or dry. The London data suggest water vapor makes up anywhere between 0.01% and 50% of the atmosphere — "quite a big range," Waldmann acknowledged. Either way, given the planet's mass, it would be difficult to walk on the surface.

"Maybe not quite your vacation destination just yet," Waldmann joked. □

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Americana awards honor John Prine, Brandi Carlile, others

By SCOTT STROUD
Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — John Prine's winning streak has continued at the Americana Music Association's annual awards ceremony in Nashville, though his two-year reign as Americana artist of the year has ended.

The 72-year-old folk singer-songwriter took home two major honors on Wednesday at Nashville's historic Ryman Auditorium. Prine won album of the year for "The Tree of Forgiveness," his first collection of new material in 13 years, and a song he wrote with Pat McLaughlin, "Summer's End," won song of the year. Prine, who had won artist of the year the previous two years and had battled health problems recently, was joined on stage by Bonnie Raitt for a stirring duet of "Angel from Montgomery," the Prine song that became a show-stopper for both artists. In his first acceptance speech, Prine joked that he could use the speeches he wrote for the Grammys, where he was nominated but did not win. Americana artist of the year honors for 2019 went to Brandi Carlile, the first woman to win it since Gillian Welch claimed the title in 2012. The award topped



Brandi Carlile, left, accepts the Artist of the Year Award at the Americana Honors & Awards show Wednesday, Sept. 11, 2019, in Nashville, Tenn.

off a stellar run for the earthy singer-songwriter whose album, "By the Way, I Forgive You," won three Grammy awards earlier this year. Carlile was one of several winners to sing the praises of producer Dave Cobb, who had a hand in the work of multiple winners and nominees.

On a night that showcased the diversity of a genre that ranges from blues to gospel to country, all of the nominees for artist of the year were female. That set the Americana awards apart

from other country music award shows this year. The other finalists were Mavis Staples, Kacey Musgraves and Rhiannon Giddens. Staples, who built a tour this year around her 80th birthday in July, was given the association's first annual Inspiration Award, presented by television journalist John Seigenthaler on behalf of the Freedom Forum and the First Amendment Center, and Ernest "Rip" Patton, who protested segregation on interstate buses as a "freedom rider" during

the civil rights movement in the early 1960s.

Staples, who had been a movement mainstay as a member of her family's band, the Staple Singers, said in her acceptance speech that the freedom songs she sang in that era were still relevant.

"We're still here and we are still carrying on," she said. "We're still singing our freedom songs."

Staples closed the awards ceremony by leading a star-studded rendition of the gospel classic "I'll Fly

Away." Giddens shared a legacy of Americana award with the late Frank Johnson, an African-American musician whose band was popular during the 1800s but whose contributions have largely been forgotten. Giddens noted in her remarks that Johnson's influence continues to be felt by modern-day musicians who had no idea where it came from.

The married duo known as The War and Treaty, Michael and Tanya Trotter, were honored as emerging act of the year, largely on the strength of their acclaimed 2018 album "Healing Tide."

The trio known as I'm With Her, comprised of Sarah Jarosz, Aoife O'Donovan and Sara Watkins, won duo/group of the year honors, while Chris Eldridge was honored as instrumentalist of the year.

Prine wasn't the only elder statesman to be honored. Eclectic rocker Elvis Costello won a lifetime achievement award for songwriting, roadhouse warrior Delbert McClinton was recognized with a lifetime achievement award for performance, and Maria Muldaur won a trailblazer award for her experimental adventures in American roots music. □

Badgley Mischka evokes an island flair at NY Fashion Week

By BROOKE LEFFERTS
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — All that was missing was the sand at the Badgley Mischka spring/summer show that featured floral prints, bathing suits and glitzy evening gowns, evoking island flair. The show opened Wednesday with a series of light green dresses and suits printed with oversized orchids and lilies in bright oranges, reds, and pinks. Some included beading, tassels and sparkly belts to heighten the tropical look. Designers Mark Badgley and James Mischka often take inspiration from their travels and from classic icons and their latest col-

lection combined both. Badgley said they had actress Claudette Colbert in mind when creating these looks, as she and other ex-pats brought Hollywood glamour to Barbados and other islands in the 1940s and 50s. "It was our imagination of how they dressed at night and photos that we've seen. There was a certain kind of decadence and ease in the way they dressed in the evening. And all of our clothes this season...are weightless. We did the pinky test and if you couldn't pick up the gown with your pinky they were too heavy," Badgley told The Associated

Press backstage before the show Wednesday. Badgley Mischka recently introduced a swimwear line and some of those designs were on display. A one-piece bathing suit had a high neck and layered cape, while a flower print pantsuit was paired with a string bikini top. For fans of the designers' eveningwear, there was plenty of sparkle and drama. Standout dresses included a bright fuchsia off-the shoulder gown with a giant peacock blue flower splashed onto one side and beading and silk flowers for texture. The label offered several sequined silhouettes, with signature



Fashion from the Badgley Mischka collection is modeled during New York Fashion Week, Wednesday Sept. 11, 2019.

Associated Press

flower appliques. Sleek sequined suits with fitted cigarette pants and long, belted jackets came in spring shades such as aqua and pink. The col-

lection also included a set of dresses and capes made of loose eyelet, with ruffled sleeves and beaded shoulders that revealed skin underneath. □

Adaptation of 'The Goldfinch' is elegant but flawed

By LINDSEY BAHR
Associated Press

Everything is beautiful in John Crowley's adaptation of "The Goldfinch," even the grilled cheese sandwich that a kind stranger makes for a boy who has just lost his mother. It's easy to get swept up by the refined stateliness surrounding this messy odyssey of grief and trauma. But like its well-pressed and repressed Anglo-Saxon protagonists,

the film keeps the drama, the emotion and the catharsis at a tidy and safely compartmentalized distance, making the experience of sitting with this two and a half hour film a unique and perplexing one.

Adapted from Donna Tartt's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, "The Goldfinch" isn't a failure, but it's not a success either. It's an ambitious effort from a hoard of



This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows Nicole Kidman, left, and Ansel Elgort in a scene from "The Goldfinch," in theaters on Sept. 13.

Associated Press

talented people, including Crowley, cinematographer Roger Deakins and actors like Nicole Kidman that gets a bit lost in its literary quirks while attempting to do everything and include everyone. It's the kind of dense, decade-spanning material that perhaps would have been better served by a miniseries like HBO has done with "My Brilliant Friend."

But they chose the middle ground: A very long movie that requires patience, at least a little knowledge of the book and some forgiveness for the things that just don't work at all (namely the romantic subplots). "The Goldfinch" is

about a man, Theo Decker (played, at 13, by Oakes Fegley and as an adult by Ansel Elgort), who is bound by a childhood trauma that he's never been able to convince himself was not his fault. His mother died, along with many others, in a bombing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The only reason they were there was because he'd been accused of smoking in school and were killing time looking at her favorite paintings before a meeting with the principal.

Two things that happen in the minutes after the devastating explosion that will come to define his life. First, a dying man asks

Theo to take his ring back to his business partner Hobie (Jeffrey Wright). Then, Theo takes something else: Carel Fabritius' 1654 painting "The Goldfinch," which he smuggles out through the chaos and keeps as a kind of anchor of guilt and shame.

Flashing back between the aftermath of the tragedy and present day, in which Theo is a grief-wracked, drug-addled and bespoke suit wearing New York antique dealer who's about to get married and contemplating suicide, the film saves showing the explosion till the very end. It's an interesting storytelling choice, considering it is a prominent part of the trailer. But it may also be the thing that gets in the way of the audience connecting to Theo's journey from the beginning.

Fegley sells his part, however, and after a little adjustment to the rhythms of the film it's hard not to be drawn in by this young man who no one seems to want to help or counsel in any real way. Even the Barboss, the extremely wealthy and formal family who takes him into their uptown home, offer little actual comforting. Kidman plays the icily compassionate matriarch. □

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GERARD BUTLER | MORGAN FREEMAN

THE ANGRY BIRDS MOVIE

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ISABELA MONER | EVA LONGORIA

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The Blonds go over-the-top with the help of 'Moulin Rouge'



This Sept. 9, 2019 photo shows, foreground from third left, Jordan Roth, Billy Porter, The Blonds designers David Blond and Phillippe Blond and Paris Hilton, second right, after the "The Blonds x Moulin Rouge!" show during Fashion Week in New York.

Associated Press

By RAGAN CLARK
Associated Press
NEW YORK (AP) — Runway met Broadway when

The Blonds took to the stage of the splashy musical "Moulin Rouge." With the help of Billy Por-

ter, who performed two songs, the ever-theatrical design duo stuck to the musical's theme, focused on a cabaret, and stayed true to their risqué style Monday for the New York Fashion Week show.

After an opening number by performers from "Moulin Rouge," Phillippe Blond descended from the ceiling in a bedazzled jumpsuit, matching moto jacket and long, blond locks. They dressed models in corsets, bustier tops, lace catsuits (worn by men and women alike) and stiletto boots that hit at the ankle, knee or thigh. □

Edmund White to receive honorary National Book Award

By HILLEL ITALIE
Associated Press

Winning an honorary National Book Award has Edmund White thinking about the more pleasurable moments of the writing life.

"Everybody always complains about it, but it occurred to me the other day that it is better than working and you meet lots of interesting people," says White, this year's recipient of the Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters, an award previously given to Toni Morrison and Philip Roth, among others.

White, 79, is among the most influential gay writers of his time, known for works such as "A Boy's Own Story" and "The Beautiful Room is Empty" and for helping to create the market for openly gay literature. The National Book Foundation announced Thursday that director John Waters will present White with his medal during the Nov. 20 awards ceremony and benefit dinner. An honorary award also will be given to the head of the American Booksellers Association, Oren Teicher, and competitive prizes for fiction, non-fiction, translation, poetry and young people's literature will be announced.



In this Tuesday, Aug. 27, 2019, photo, author Edmund White appears at his home in New York. White, 79, is among the most influential gay writers of the past half century, known for such works as the novels "A Boy's Own Story" and "The Beautiful Room is Empty."

White has had a prolific and versatile career, publishing novels, memoirs, criticism and biography, and winning a National Book Critics Circle award for his book on playwright Jean Genet. He is also a longtime activist who was on hand during the Stonewall riots of 1969 and later helped found the Gay Men's Health Crisis. "Most writers don't set out to break barriers or trail blaze, but rather to share their unique perspectives and stories on the page,"

Lisa Lucas, executive director of the National Book Foundation, said in a statement. "It's only when you're able to look back at a body of work that one is able to see a career like Edmund White's for what it is: revolutionary and vital, making legible for scores of readers the people, moments and history that would come to define not only queer lives, but also the broader trajectory of American culture." Interviewed recently in the living room of his apart-

ment in Manhattan's Chelsea district, White is alternately generous, erudite and indiscreet. A professor emeritus at Princeton University, he remembered disagreeing with his colleague Toni Morrison over popular culture (she liked it, while he was "this weird mandarin who never had a television"). He spoke of attending a National Book Awards ceremony in the 1970s with a "horribly drunk" John Ashbery, being threatened with legal ac-

tion by Gore Vidal (over a play he had written about Vidal and Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh) and becoming estranged from Susan Sontag, who took offense at a vain character in his historical novel "Caricole."

"People think I dislike her. I don't. I worshipped her, but she turned against me," White says of Sontag, who died in 2004. "When I was in my 20s I interviewed Aaron Copeland (for Time-Life). I said to myself, 'He is so admirable, he has no enemies. Everybody loves him.' And I thought, 'I would like to be like that.' But then it's almost inevitable that people will hate you, for one reason or another."

White has had health problems over the past decade, suffering a heart attack and two strokes. But he remains busy as ever, with the novel "A Saint in Texas" completed and a play (about a wife and mother who wants to become a man) in the works. In an email to The Associated Press, John Waters wrote that he had read "every book Edmund White has ever written."

"I love the later ones even more than the early work that made him famous," he added. "He's so smart, it's scary." □

Little Big Town to reveal new album on historic theater tour

By KRISTIN M. HALL
Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Country group Little Big Town always wanted to play Carnegie Hall, but it took more than just practice, like the old joke goes, to get them there.

The Grammy winners have been in the studio for over a year working on their self-produced ninth studio album "Nightfall," and they'll perform it in full at the famed theater on Jan. 16, the night before it is released.

"The record feels kind of cinematic to me, but there's also a lot of beautiful intimate moments," singer Karen Fairchild told The Associated Press. "In a theater, this record is really go-

ing to shine." The Carnegie Hall appearance kicks off a tour of iconic and historic theaters across the country in 2020 including the Apollo Theater in Harlem, the Taft Theatre in Cincinnati, the Chicago Theatre, the Paramount Theatre in Seattle and many more. The tour, with opening act Caitlyn Smith, runs through May 2. Fairchild, her husband Jimi Westbrook, Kimberly Schlapman and Phillip Sweet turned inward for the new record, choosing to self-produce after working with hit producer Jay Joyce for several years. That changed up the normal schedule of recording for them.

"We just couldn't stop recording, which in the end



This May 4, 2019 file photo shows Phillip Sweet, from left, Kimberly Schlapman, Karen Fairchild and Jimi Westbrook, of Little Big Town, at the iHeartCountry Festival in Austin, Texas.

Associated Press

makes it a whole lot more difficult," said Westbrook. They've released just two songs from the new record so far, including the smart and timely song, "The

Daughters," about the way women are treated unequally in society. Fairchild said they never expected the song to be embraced by radio, but they spent a

lot of time this year talking about its importance and playing it at awards shows. "If you're listening to country radio, you're not hearing that kind of lyric," Fairchild said.

"We feel like we need to do the risky thing because sometimes we just feel like we should."

But their new single, "Over Drinking," almost didn't make the album because by the time they heard it, they had already completed the album.

A short video clip of the song was sent to them by one of the writers, Jesse Frasure, only a few weeks ago and they started frantically texting him back. "I was dying to hear the whole song," Fairchild said. □

Crew with seeds, corals restore environment in Puerto Rico

By DANICA COTO, Associated Press

FAJARDO, Puerto Rico (AP)

— As crews re-string electric lines and clear debris from Hurricane Maria, a small group of Puerto Rican and international conservationists is working on rebuilding natural wonders destroyed by the strongest storm to hit the island in nearly a century.

Environmental groups and volunteers are gathering native seeds to replant forests across the U.S. territory and grafting broken coral back onto shattered reefs to help repair damage in the largest-ever effort of its kind for Puerto Rico.

The Category 4 storm damaged 1.2 billion trees and snapped hundreds of thousands of corals off reefs around the island when it hit on Sept. 20. Despite the widespread destruction, a lack of funding and pressing human needs kept pushing back long-term plans to replant trees and rebuild corals.

Now that Puerto Rico is slowly regaining its footing after the storm and initial funding has been secured, conservationists are fanning out across the island and into its waters to repair and restore what's left of the island's flora.

"The damage is huge," said Nilda Jimenez, marine ecology director for the island's Department of Natural Resources.

Helping nature recover has environmental and economic importance: Puerto Rico's natural beauty is one of its biggest tourist draws. Experts also note that reefs protect coasts from heavy swells and serve as habitat for many species consumed on the island, including red snappers, lobsters and octopi.

Last week, a group of divers assembled on a dock in the northeast coastal town of Fajardo, a popular destination for tourists eager to explore reefs that once boasted bright colors and a multitude of fish. Now, hundreds of broken corals that are still alive lay scattered across the turquoise waters, ranging in size from



In this March 2, 2019 photo, Manuel Sepulveda, a nursery management coordinator with Para la Naturaleza, a non-profit organization, transplants several small native oak tree seedlings, in one of its nurseries in the in Rio Piedras Botanical Garden, in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

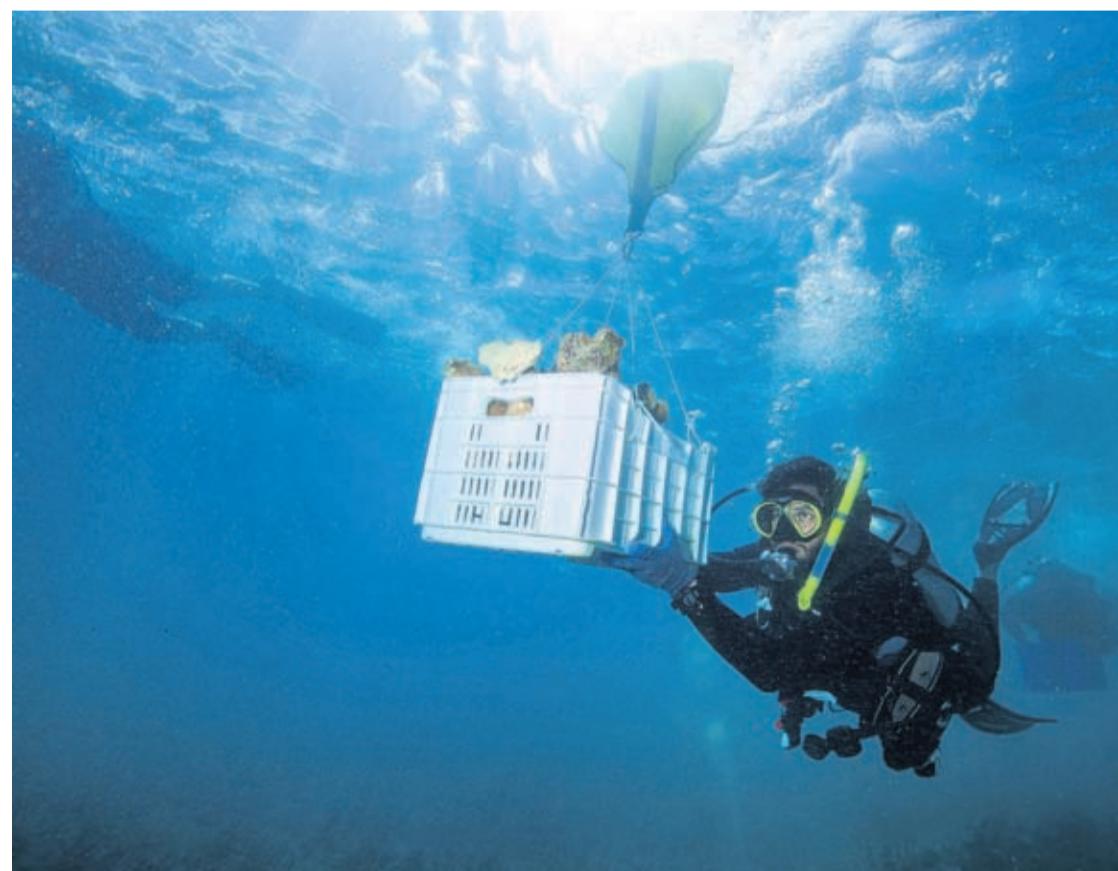
Associated Press

a grapefruit to a car. Armed with buckets of cement, divers pick up the broken pieces and swim to reefs that have been identified as healthy despite the battering they received from the storm. The divers brush away any algae that have built up and push the pieces down into the freshly laid cement.

"If you think about what you're seeing, it's broken

animals," said Jim Ritterhoff, executive director of Force Blue, a nonprofit organization made up of retired U.S. Special Operations veterans working on coral reef conservation projects. The group is participating in a nearly \$1.5 million project largely funded by the U.S. government with help from the U.S. nonprofit organization Ocean Conservancy to help restore between

100 and 300 corals a day in Puerto Rico for two months. They are focusing on the island's northeast region, where swaths of mostly elkhorn and staghorn corals received the brunt of large swells generated during the hurricane. If further funding is available, divers will target other areas as well. "The sooner we get out there, the better," said Sean Griffin, coral reef res-



In this Feb. 28, 2019, photo, diver and Force Blue Co-Founder Rudy Reyes handles a crate full of coral to replace corals ripped off the reef during Hurricane Maria, as part of a nearly \$1.5 million coral reef restoration effort largely funded by the federal government, off the coast of Fajardo, Puerto Rico.

Associated Press

toration ecologist with the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. "There are still tens of thousands of corals out there that are upside down or even just on their side that we can get out there and save."

Similar restoration efforts are taking place on land miles away from the divers. At a greenhouse run by the nonprofit group Para La Naturaleza in the capital of San Juan, volunteers and workers tend to thousands of budding plants that will grow into trees as they're planted across the island. They have planted nearly 1,900 trees since January, with a goal of 750,000 in the next seven years, said Luisa Rosado, the group's habitat manager.

"This is a project where we really won't see the results," she said. "The results will be from now to 100 years."

It's also a labor-intensive project where crews have to return every three months to the site where the trees are planted to monitor their progress during the first year, then every four months in the second year. Rosado said more volunteers are needed, especially because the nonprofit is tied up visiting places around the island trying to find seeds for native and endemic species.

Sometimes they get lucky and people call them, saying they uncovered seeds amid hurricane debris. A man from the western mountain town of Lares recently brought in a 4-foot-tall bag filled with branches and leaves but also a tiny black seed known as aceitillo, which is now a rare species.

The find drew a big smile from Manuel Sepulveda, greenhouse managing coordinator for Para La Naturaleza.

"There are very few seed banks in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean," he said. "We need millions of seeds." The efforts also have a deeper meaning for Rosado.

"This is a way for us to recuperate together," she said. "To recover the island." □